



Inſto præpoſitis oblitus præteritorum.



Inſto præpoſitis oblitus præteritorum.

S E R M O N S

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS

AND

O C C A S I O N S.

By SIR ADAM GORDON, BART. M. A. *K*

LATE OF CHRIST-CHURCH, OXFORD,

AND

RECTOR OF HINXWORTH, HERTS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.

PHIL. iii. 32.

Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum.

LUCAN.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;

AND SOLD BY P. ELMSLY, IN THE STRAND.

M.DCC.XC.

927
12

SERMONS

BY REV. J. C. BARNES

OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY J. C. BARNES, 10, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, 1847.

AND SOLD AT A BIBLE IN THE STRAND

1847

THIS Work was in readiness for the press *some months* before the decease of the Noble Personage to whose protection it was consigned ; but has been retarded since, by one of the *severest afflictions* having befallen the author that human nature can experience. He now begs leave to add this slight sketch of character ; and relies on the indulgence of his readers, to admit, as an apology for not *withdrawing* the *original* dedication, that he is advised to let it remain, in joint tribute of respect with this humble effort that precedes it.

This work was written for the purpose
of showing the character of the Noble
age of the world, and is a study of
the world's history, and of the
great questions raised by it, and
how they can be answered. The new
history is not a study of the past, but
of the present, and of the future.
It is a study of the world's history,
and of the great questions raised by it,
and of how they can be answered.
It is a study of the world's history,
and of the great questions raised by it,
and of how they can be answered.

28 SE 60

(v)

SUNT QUI DEFUNCTORUM QUOQUE AMICOS AGANT.

PLINII EPIST.

IN HONOUR

OF THE MOST NOBLE JAMES BRYDGES DUKE OF CHANDOS;

Who died the 29th of September, 1789, in the 58th year
of his age, after a short but painful illness, which he bore
with the inherent fortitude of his Heroic Ancestry.

THIS AMIABLE NOBLEMAN

Was removed from the present transitory scene;

Possessed of all the world can boast,

Or justly value:

High posts of honour—consequence of power,

Great prospects of increasing affluence,

Conjugal happiness;

And the personal esteem and friendship

of

HIS SOVEREIGN.

(vi)

IN AN AGE

When ostentation and voluptuousness unite
To corrupt the manners and absorb the resources
Of benevolent enterprize ;
Splendour without excess,
Temperance in pleasure,
and

TRUE MUNIFICENCE,

(When propriety warranted the display of generous exertion)
Most eminently mark the characteristics
Of an uncontaminated
and

PRINCELY MIND.

FRANK AND AFFABLE

To those who looked up to him for favour,
He still maintained a due respect to station,
And the honours derived from high descent :
Equally happy in preserving the balance of their influence
From inviting servility,
As from obstructing the exercise of a most pleasing
Department.

IN HIS SENATORIAL CAPACITY,

IRREPROACHABLE :

Steady to the real welfare of his country,
and
Purely devoted to the service
of

HIS ROYAL MASTER.

To a heart inclined to succour the distressed,
The tale of misery finds an easy introduction,

And

And cheering notice of the drooping stranger *
Affords an exemplary record
of
GENUINE BENEVOLENCE.

Qualities so benign and valuable,
And friendship influenced by worth of character,
Raise both respect, and self-complacency, in all
Distinguished by his regard.

From this faint transcript of desert,
The public must be sensible of its loss :
And near connexions long lament their
IRREPARABLE MISFORTUNE.
Though by this event the Author is deprived
Of hopeful patronage,
A due sense of past endeavours will ever remain :
Instead, therefore, of suppressing the unpolluted praise
Intended for *living* merit,
He now dedicates this grateful offering
To the *memory* of the
DEPARTED.

* The case of an unpreferred clergyman with a numerous family is here alluded to, whom the Duke presented to a living, and with other marks of beneficence, on hearing of his comfortless situation.

And the first of these is the fact that
the author has not only written
the book, but has also written
the introduction, the preface, and
the conclusion. The book is written
in a style which is both simple and
clear, and it is written in a way
which is both interesting and
instructive. The author has written
the book in a way which is both
simple and clear, and it is written
in a way which is both interesting
and instructive. The author has
written the book in a way which
is both simple and clear, and it
is written in a way which is both
interesting and instructive.

28 SE 60

The first of these is the fact that
the author has not only written
the book, but has also written
the introduction, the preface, and
the conclusion. The book is written
in a style which is both simple and
clear, and it is written in a way
which is both interesting and
instructive. The author has written
the book in a way which is both
simple and clear, and it is written
in a way which is both interesting
and instructive. The author has
written the book in a way which
is both simple and clear, and it
is written in a way which is both
interesting and instructive.

DEDICATION.

TO

HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF CHANDOS, &c.*

LORD HIGH STEWARD OF HIS MA-
JESTY'S HOUSEHOLD, &c.

MY LORD DUKE,

BEING honoured with the permission of presenting these humble pages to your Grace, I feel most anxiously concerned to acquit myself becomingly upon the occasion. Any public exhibition of literature is in itself an awful undertaking: the *first* attempt creates proportionate apprehensions; and to render an introduction of this nature entirely unexceptionable,

* The above Dedication is printed as it originally stood, for the reasons pre-advanced.

requires .

requires the joint exertion of talents and dexterity ; and to a novice in the art, presents a still more arduous task.

When it became expedient to prepare the present fearful effort, I had recourse for leading models to the most approved adepts in this particular style of composition :—I wished to word it from the *heart*, and yet to be assisted in the *manner* ; but I found my masters so universally addicted to one general principle, which I dare not venture to employ, nor indeed have skill or inclination to adopt, that I derived no other benefit from my researches, than the determination of thinking for myself.

From my notice of so prevailing a defect in many celebrated writers, this thought occurred :—that when an author is addressing his Patron, if he would duly reflect, that the estimate of his principles is registered, as well as his situation, he would be equally circumspect not to disgrace the one, as willing that the other should be regarded. If he adverted, that, whilst the value of his
 mental

mental labours afforded them an existence, his *sentiments* and *character* were in perpetual review ; it would render him discreetly sparing of his *praises* and *professions*, and determine him not to sink the man and gentleman, under any apologies from disappointment, or dependence : he would kiss the hand of Providence in respect to the latter, but hold himself accountable to posterity for his support of the former.

It is true, that the rough attendants of misfortune make desperate havoc with those busy ministers which supply our *finer feelings* ; and sharp necessity will overthrow the stubborn bulwarks of fancied independence, and opposing pride :—but seldom is it seen, where early cultivation has been bestowed on any hereditary good quality, that the principle so far degenerates as to become subservient to disgraceful purposes. If a man of the above description is led to deal in panegyric, he feels himself incapable of any thing but *honest* praise ; and like a choice plant, which, though it suffers from undue neglect

glect, yet still retains its discriminating property—so no vicissitude will quench the *torch of real virtue*, though it may contribute to confine its splendour. FAX MENTIS HONESTA GLORIA.*——Ignoble conduct generally proceeds from want of innate principle, and is rarely produced by any sinister event that Providence may please to suffer for our trial. Thus impressed with due veneration for a character no ways incompatible with adverse fortune, your Grace will be secure that the armour I have chosen, against the insinuating suggestions of self-interest and adulation, will amply shield me from admitting any idea subversive of pure decorum. There are *some* articles, however, my Lord Duke, upon which I may be indulged the pleasure to enlarge, without risking personal disgust, or public censure.

There cannot fail to be a flattering sensation in every virtuous mind, whom

* Motto to the order of distinction worn by Scotch baronets.

Providence hath pleased to raise to dignified superiority, because the efficient motive argues excellence of character in the party honoured. It is this captivating prospect that stimulates and crowns the various talents which laudably contend for noble fame; it is this well-earned reward that perpetuates the worth or heroism of our forefathers: and when I investigate the records of your Grace's ancestry, and trace their spirit in your nearer kindred, the pure succession of elevated ideas denotes conspicuously the quality of descent, by a singular display of magnificence and taste:—that magnanimity which stamped their merit, when military achievements chiefly bore the test of praise, only changed its *mode* of exercise, in times more peaceful and refined. Pre-eminence, indeed, of every kind, reflects credit on posterity, and gratifies the mind with the most desirable possession that, in a temporal view, it is capable of admitting.

Still,

Still, *virtue* is the intrinsic ornament of nobility; and in approaching one who has so fair a claim to worth of character, it may be expected I should here give loose to *personal eulogium*.—But as the general consent of the good vacates any necessity for *my* encomiums; and as persons of greatest merit, and accomplishments, are always least fond of their own praise; if, in its proper place, I request liberty to insert any mark of my *own* experience, it must candidly be attributed to an impulse very different from *flattery*: restrained by the purity of those principles I have before extolled, no less than the nature of the connexion* I have the honour to bear, I shall disappoint the greedy ear of carping curiosity, nor hazard any thing but what every generous and sensible mind, I am confident, will approve.

You possess, my Lord, that living mark of virtuous distinction, which genuine integrity may justly boast, and honestly

* CHAPLAIN to his Grace.

enjoy—YOUR SOVEREIGN'S FAVOUR ; the merited regard of a master, whose choice, whenever noticed by the dictates of his heart, reflects his own virtues in the qualities of his servants ; who would have all about him sincere and upright, were it possible. Invidious desire, and narrow jealousy, may infuse alloy into every favoured situation ; but in the future records of the historic page, when slander and envy miss the food of interested motive to provoke their venomous appetite, then those names will *permanently* shine, who are found distinguished by the preference of a RELIGIOUS MONARCH.

Respecting public praise :---In the discharge of your political capacity, under the various events of ministerial change, the bias of your Grace's judgment has inclined to that decision which every observant mind must admire and emulate ; the valuable interests of your country, not those of other men, further than their judicious management and steady principles

ples deserved support. The fluctuating nature of state affairs is apt to aid the unfair surmises of those who attach no *other* idea to elevated posts than *merely* views of *private benefit*; but a just conception of the motives that principally influence an independent, honest mind, leads to more candid sentiment. The conduct of *sterling* patriotism may be compared to those ponderous bodies on a planet, which, though they *seem* to move with the general revolution, remain unshaken, from the essential nature of their own fixed laws.

“ Justum, et tenacem propositi virum,

“ Non civium ardor prava jubentium,

.....

“ Mente quatit solida,

.....

.....

“ Si fractus illabatur orbis,

“ Impavidum ferient ruinæ.”

The reasons pre-advanced against suspicion of *fulsome* praise, preclude the pleasure of dwelling upon particulars of no less

less exemplary than valuable description. But *gratitude will* be heard, and urges me to make a public testimony of your Grace's friendly *efforts* to soften trials, the consequence of *successively* unfavourable and *inevitable* contingencies: and though the desired effect did not attend your beneficent exertions, yet they demand equal acknowledgment from a mind susceptible of generous regard.

I am sensible I need your Grace's utmost candour to excuse the length and imperfection of this address; which however I must not close, without most cordially attesting the proper sense I entertain of the warm part Her Grace the Duchess of Chandos kindly took, in her endeavours to procure for me the favourite object * alluded to above; and for her renewed sollicitation lately, to promote my interest some other way. For these in-

* The Living of Taplow, Bucks, where the author had officiated as curate near fourteen years.

stances of good will, as likewise for the
soothing hope arising from the friendly
professions of future favour, contained in
your Grace's correspondence, I most hum-
bly entreat your Graces, jointly, to accept
my bounden thanks; and praying for the
long continuance of your mutual hap-
piness, I remain, with every due respect,

MY LORD DUKE,

YOUR GRACE'S

obliged, faithful,

and most humble servant,

ADAM GORDON.

Hinxworth, Herts,

May 4, 1789.

28 SE 60

P R E F A C E.

I HAVE not much to say by way of preface or introduction; but as something of the kind may be expected, nothing can more become, or profit me, than, in the first place, to supplicate the favour of the reader, whose candid judgment I am very sensible I shall greatly need, during the perusal of these imperfect pages.

The effusions of the heart, I am ready to confess, may more generally be discovered in the following discourses, than the labour of the brain; and therefore I am aware they are not calculated to endure the strict scrutiny of severe criticism: for which reason, "*contentus paucis lectoribus*," I take refuge in the kind partiality of those valuable

b 2

friends,

friends, whose flattering recommendation may assure me proportionable indulgence with *their* obliging connexions, to whom I am hereby introduced. Their unwearied zeal to promote my undertaking demands every return in my power; at present I have no other but this public testimony of grateful acknowledgment.

It may not be improper here to add a few words respecting the different parts of the following work.

It will be obvious, that in compositions of this cast, similitude of sentiment and expression is in some degree unavoidable, especially where scriptural illustration is employed to vindicate the argument; and also that the thoughts being exhibited in a collective view, repetitions will consequently become more conspicuous: wherever this may appear more frequent than might be desirable, I would humbly wish it to be imputed to defect of genius, not to inattention.

I have intruded upon my reader with but
few

few compositions in the more familiar style ; their *subject*, and particular *end*, will clearly mark which sermons are of *that kind* : concerning these, I beg leave to hope, that the positive necessity of using such words and diction as can render an address of any service to the *uneducated* hearer, will sufficiently account for the simplicity both of matter and manner. Perhaps an apology may be requisite for inserting them at all : I must take the liberty of suggesting, that I was induced thereto by reasons which my conscience assures me are justifiable.

The 9th, 10th, and 11th discourses of the second volume, it may be observed, afford an exception to my own remark, they having been so ** lately* preached, and to a country congregation, in the most *literal* sense. In truth, the subject of this address to which I allude, was so *important* and *sin-*

* The whole work would have been published near a year past, but for reasons mentioned in the advertisement preceding the dedication.

gular, and, in my own opinion, so deserving the utmost pains that could be bestowed upon it, that I judged it expedient to give the language a little higher polish than was needful in the delivery, in order the better to recommend my unequal effort to the notice of a more refined tribunal. I am very sensible how wanting I am in ability to do strict justice to *such* a subject: languid spirits, and declining powers, deny that vigorous exertion the task requires. Instead of that animation, which a weakened mind and chilled endeavours have attempted to supply, an humble honest zeal to produce some general benefit, from a serious consideration of this most interesting event, must be accepted as an excuse for other deficiencies. This I can most safely affirm, that if I could at any time have *done* better, it is impossible *ever* to have more heartily *wished* to acquit myself successfully than in the present cause.

As to the other discourses, part of them were written on public occasions, when the
subject

subject required to be introduced in the best dress the author could furnish, from a just principle of respect to the particular description of his audience: and here again a slender stock of capacity must atone for an appearance so inadequate to the importance of the undertaking.

The remainder of the work was delivered in a neighbourhood, where I exercised the duties of my profession for a long course of time; many of the inhabitants consisting of characters in the most elevated and elegant stations: and it is from the kind encouragement of some of these very friends, that I now venture to commit this tedious trespass on their patience, in *writing*. A word respecting the *Farewell* Sermon delivered to this same congregation seems needful in this place. I am aware of its unusual length: for the relief of the reader, I have divided it where the subject would admit a desirable time of rest. In defence of its *prolixity*, I would beg leave to intimate, that having been full twenty-five years in

b 4

that

that country, and above half that time intrusted with the charge of this one parish, my attachment pleaded every effort during the *last hour* I might ever be indulged to tender my mite of professional advice before an assembly *too partial* to my humble labours : and having since experienced their *sincerity* by an unanimous good wish towards me under a long and trying suspense of what might have been the issue of my fate, in regard to a * *renewal* of my clerical connection with them, I feel myself still *more* indebted to afford them a perusal of the *whole* of what they once were pleased to approve, and generally *desire*. Without *this* consideration, doubtless, the sermon should have been differently modelled, and much curtailed, to entitle it to the favour of more public judgment. Before I conclude, it will be necessary to bespeak the indulgence of

* The author's expectation of being presented to the Rectory of Taplow, on the decease of his friend, the Honourable and Rev. Mr. Hamilton.

my friends, as to any typographical errors they may meet with in this humble performance, my unavoidable distance from the press rendering it impossible I could attend to a due correction of these inaccuracies. I shall only subjoin one more remark, which is too interesting to my own feelings to refrain, viz. that to those of my patrons by whom I have the honour to be *known*, I trust my views and situation will amply rescue me from any suspicion of being governed by vanity or presumption in the present attempt. They are well assured that different * objects gave rise to this production ;

* The author is not unwilling to acknowledge that an humble wish of communicating the labours and experience of his latter years to his acquaintance, had some share of influence in the present undertaking; and likewise, that being sequestered from the world by a concurrence of sinister events, and the retirement of his situation, a due regard to the interests of his family suggested, that the distribution of the work among his friends would supply an *occasional memorandum* to some of them, which

duction ; and, after what has been said, I am also inclined to hope the rest of my kind readers, to whom I am a stranger, will be generously disposed to acquit me of being actuated by any other motives than such as, I trust, will bear a *favourable* construction. I cannot dare to suppose that my feeble exertions in the GRAND CAUSE will prove more propitious in correcting the objectionable manners of the times, than the valuable efforts of my fellow labourers in the vineyard ; and especially when such abundant store of excellent precepts, more powerfully urged both from pen and pulpit, by my superiors in every sense, produces so little adequate

which their own important engagements, and his inability to pay becoming attendance, might render necessary to prevent an entire oblivion of their kind professions, and the loss of all benefit from a powerful and respectable alliance. If these are exceptionable motives, *affectionate zeal*, and *disappointed hope*, must take part in the defence ; and he trusts the general spirit of the performance will make amends for *their* coalition in the design.

effect.

effect. Purity of inclination is the only pretension I assume.

In reviewing the list of those who have honoured this publication with their patronage, it is extremely gratifying to see so large a number of my cotemporaries in early life, many of them *now* in posts of highest dignity and trust; and yet, neither the long course of *twenty years*, nor the too general effect of pre-eminence, wealth, and power, has contaminated the principles of that genuine worth and amiableness of manners, which so long ago begat esteem; which will always distinguish *real* goodness of heart, and innate magnanimity; and which encouraged me to hazard an application after such a lapse of time: on the contrary, where the mind is changed and spoiled in consequence of temporary superiority, or even *hereditary* honours, pity and contempt take place of pure and permanent respect. Whatever homage *such* receive, can only be considered as mere perquisite of office, not the just tribute due
to

to intrinsic excellence of character. The estimate of attachment in the *former* class is confirmed by full proof of its sincerity, and has made a DUE IMPRESSION.

When *some* of us started in the arduous course together, fair expectation equally warmed our hopes; but as it frequently happens in the event, that "the race is not to the swift, &c." if any of my readers have felt *this* truth, I would beg leave most cordially to sympathize, and admonish in the language of an old companion, during our years of happy exemption from lacerating disappointment and worldly sorrows—" *Durum ; sed levius fit patientiâ.*" And to those whose industry and anxious hope have been compensated by affluence and power, or who may have obtained the envied prize through the easier channel of fortunate contingency;—with equal humility, affection, and respect, with all due deference to the useful import and just authority of exalted station, I would prescribe an antidote against the pernicious influence
of

of these seducing and transient favours, and take my leave of *them* too with the same Poet's observation and advice :

" *Non possidentem multa vocaveris*

" *Recte beatum : rectius occupat*

" *Nomen beati, qui Deorum*

" *Muneribus sapienter uti.*"

- - - - " *Æquâ lege necessitas*

" *Sortitur insignes et imos,*

" *Omne capax movet urna women.*"

The Preface to a work of this complexion cannot conclude with more propriety than in the phrase of scripture :
" ALL IS VANITY, BUT TO FEAR GOD,
" AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS."

of their leading and highest thought, and
take my leave of them too with the same
heart's affection and advice:

My dear friends, I am
very glad to hear
that you are all
well and happy.

I am very glad to hear
that you are all
well and happy.

The Father to a work of this kind
has been a constant companion with more pro-
pensity than in the place of his friends.
I am very glad to hear that you are all
well and happy.

28 SE60

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

A.

ATHOL, her Grace the Duchess Dowager of,
and Lady of the Right Hon. Lord Adam
Gordon

Abercorn, Right Hon. late Earl of
Arniston, Lady

Austin, Mr.

Austin, Mrs.

Abdy, Rev. Mr. Rector of Cooperfield,
Essex

Ambler, Charles, Esq. M. P.

B.

Bulkeley, Right Hon. Lord Viscount,
2 sets

Boyd, Sir Robert, Knight of the Bath

Boyd, Lady

Boyd, John, Esq.

Boyd, Mrs.

Beaumont, Sir George, Bart.

Beaumont, Lady

Berkeley, Rev. Dr. Prebendary of Canterbury

Berkeley, Mrs.

Berkeley, George Monck, Esq.

Berkeley, Rev. Dr. Dean of Tuam

Barton, Rev. Charles, Rector of St. Andrew's, Holborn.

Barton, Mrs.

Browne, Barnshaw, Esq.

Berdmore, Rev. Dr. Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, 2 sets

Booth, Sir Charles, Bart.

Bootle, Richard Wilbraham, Esq.

Buckeridge, John, Esq.

Buckeridge, Miss

Bland, Tho. D. Esq. Kippax Park, Yorkshire

Bland, Mrs.

Beresford, Marcus, Esq. M. P. Ireland

Bowles, ———, Esq. Hele Place, Wiltshire

Bowles, Mrs.

Baillie, M——, Esq.

Baillie, Mrs.

Billingsley, Edward, Esq.

Bernard, ———, Esq.

Baugh,

Baugh, Jos. Esq.

Barrett, Mrs.

Bushnall, Mr.

Baker, Rev. Slade, LL. B. Redland,

Bristol

Buckingham, Right Hon. Marquis of

C.

Chandos, his Grace late Duke of

Chandos, her Grace the Duchess of

Chandos, her Grace the Duchess Dowager of

Cornwallis, Right Hon. Earl of, Governor

General in India

Cooke, Right Hon. Lady Amelia, and

Cooke, Thomas Ivie, Esq. 5 sets

Cornwall, Rev. Walker, Prebendary of

Windfor, and

Cornwall, Mrs. 5 sets

Chamberlayn, Rev. Mr. Fellow of Eton College

Clerke, Rev. Sir William, Bart.

Carnegie, Sir David, Bart. M. P. 5 sets

Cashel, Most Rev. Lord Archbishop of

Clonfert, Right Rev. Lord Bishop of

Vol. I.

c

Corke,

Corke, Right Rev. Lord Bishop of
Clonmell, Right Hon. Lord Viscount
Carleton, Right Hon. Lord
Cooke, Edward, Esq.
Castell, Mrs.
Cartwright, Miss B.
Crop, Richard, Esq.
Crop, Mrs.
Coulson, Jukes, Esq. 2 sets
Carter, Mrs.
Collins, Edward, Esq.
Carduus, Rev. Dr.
Crewe, Miss Emma
Compton, Rev. John, 2 sets
Clerke, Mr. Alderman
Combe, Mr. Alderman
Conyers, Rev. Edward
Caldwell, Right Hon. Lady

D.

Dundas, Right Hon. Henry, Treasurer of
the Navy, &c.
Dundas, Miss
Dundas, Mrs. Robert
Drummond,

Drummond, Henry, jun. Esq.
Drummond, Mrs. Henry, jun.
Drummond, Andrew, Esq.
Drummond, the Hon. and Rev. George
Hay
Dublin, Most Rev. Lord Archbishop of
Donoughmore, Right Hon. Lord
Dehany, Mrs.
Doyly, Christopher, Esq.
Doyly, Mrs.
Day, Mr. J.
Day, Mrs. E.
Day, Mrs. A.
Dingley, Rev. Robert, and
Dingley, Mrs. & sets
Dowding, William, Esq.
Dodgson, —, Esq.
Denman, Mrs.
Dunster, Rev. Charles
Dunster, Mrs.
Ducie, Right Hon. Lord
Dalrymple, Sir Hugh
Dalrymple, Lady
Dunnage, John, Esq.
Delasfield, Joseph, Esq.
Dillon,

Dillon, Rev. Robert

Dillon, Capt. Joseph

Dolben, Joseph English, Esq.

Davies, late Rev. Isaac

Davies, Mrs.

Eden, Hon. Morton, Envoy Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary from his Britannic
Majesty to the Court of Dresden

Eden, Lady Elizabeth

Elliot, Sir Gilbert, Bart. M. P.

Elliot, Lady

Ellis, Charles, Esq.

Ellis, Mr. Alderman

Elfley, Rev. Henneage, and

Elfley, Mrs. 5 sets.

Eamer, John, Esq.

Edwards, Samuel, Esq.

Everett, Thomas, Esq.

Elmsly, Mr. P. 12 sets.

Eckerfall, John, Esq.

Fitz-Gibbon, the Right Hon. Lord John,
Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

Fitz-Gerald, Right Hon. James, M. P.
Faucett, Lady
Fisher, Rev. Mr. Prebendary of Windsor
Foulkes, Rev. Peter.
Frincham, Mrs.
Farbrace, Mrs. George
Free, John, Esq.
Fletcher, ———, M. D. Bristol
Ferrers, Thomas, Esq.
Falwaffer, Mr.
French, Richard, Esq.

G.

Gordon, his Grace the Duke of
Gordon, her Grace the Duchess of
Gordon, Right Hon. Lord Adam
Gordon, Thomas, Esq. 10 sets.
Gordon, William, Esq. Bristol.
Gamon, Richard, Esq. M. P.
Gamon, Mrs.
Godfrey, William, Esq.
Godfrey, Miss
Gardiner, Sir J. Whalley, Bart.
Goodenough, George, Esq. 5 sets
Gibbons, Rev. John

Gibson, Mrs.
Grant, John, Esq.
Giles, Daniel, Esq. Bank Director
Giles, Daniel, Esq. jun.
Grove, Edward, Esq.
George, Chapman, Esq.
Griffith, Rev. Mr.
Guise, Sir John, Bart.
Guise, Lady

H.

Huntley, Right Hon. Marquis of
Hamilton, Hon. Mrs. George, Wimpole
Street
Hamilton, Hon. Lady Cecil
Hamilton, Miss
Hamilton, Miss Elizabeth
Hamilton, Miss Catharine
Hamilton, Miss Rachel
Hamilton, Miss Jane
Hamilton, Miss Isabella
Hobart, Right Hon. Robert, M. P.
Horne, the very Rev. Dr. Dean of Can-
terbury.
Hales, Sir John, Bart.
Hales,

Hales, Lady
Hall, Lieut. General
Henley, Mrs. George
Henley Miss
Hayes, Hon. Judge
Hayes, Rev. James
Hayes, Rev. John
Hayes, Charles, Esq.
Hill, Joseph, Esq.
Hill, Mrs.
Hill, Mrs. Theodosia
Hill, Mrs. Frances
Hillman, Sir William
Holden, Robert, Esq. Darley, Derbyshire
Hooke, Mr.
Hutchinson, Miss
Hammond, Edmund, Esq.
Hutton, Rev. Mr. Houghton le Spring,
Durham
Halhed, Nath. Esq. Harley Street
Hackshaw, Mrs.

I.

Inchiquin, Right Hon. Earl of
Jeffreys, Rev. Dr. Canon Residentiary of
St. Paul's, &c.

(xl)

Jackson, Thomas Scott, Esq.

Jackson, William, Esq. jun. Canterbury,

2 sets

Ingram, Miss

K.

Kinnoul, Right Hon. Earl of, 10 sets

King, Rev. Dr. Prebendary of Canterbury

Kettilby, Rev. Dr.

King, Joseph, Esq.

King, Mrs.

L.

Litchfield and Coventry, the Hon. and

Right Reverend Lord Bishop of

London, Right Rev. Lord Bishop of

Lincoln, Right Rev. Lord Bishop of

Lewisham, Right Hon Lord

Lindores, Right Hon Lady

Leigh, Right Hon. Lady Caroline

Leigh, James Henry, Esq.

Leigh, Mrs.

Loveden, Edward, Esq. M. P.

Leighton, Mrs.

Leighton,

Leighton, Miss

Lechmere, Edmund, Esq.

Laprimaudaye, Rev. Mr.

Lee, John, Esq.

Lee, Mrs.

Lane, Thomas, Esq.

Loftus, Right Hon Lord Viscount

Ludlow, Abraham, M. D. Bristol

Lockwood, William, Esq. jun.

Lees, John, Esq.

Lennard, -----, Esq.

M.

Marlborough, his Grace the Duke of

Mexborough, Right Hon. Earl of

Mexborough, Right Hon. Lady

Murray, Right Hon. Lord William

Muirhead, Right Hon Lady Jane, 2 sets

Metham, Sir George Montgomery

Majendie, Rev. Mr. Prebendary of Windsor

Mukins, Francis, Esq. 3 sets

Milbourne, Thomas, Esq.

Milbanke, Hon. Mrs.

Milbourne, Mrs.

Malthus, Mrs.

Maurice,

Maurice, Rev. Richard
Mann, Miss
Mowbray, William, Esq.
Mowbray, Mrs.
Monck, Miss
Meynell, Mrs. York
March, Mrs.
Milles, Thomas, Esq.

N.

Norwich, Right Rev. Lord Bishop of
Nugent, Rev. George
Newton, Francis, Esq.
Newell, Mr.
Newnham, Mr. Alderman
Nash, Sir Stephen, Bristol
Newnham, Mrs.
Newell, Mrs.

O.

Offory, Right Rev. Lord Bishop of
Osborne, Sir Thomas, Bart. M. P. Dublin
Onslow, Rev. Dr. Canon of Christ Church
Onslow, Mrs. M. Newman-Street

P. Pretymán

P.

Pretyman, Mrs. Bugden Palace
Powney, P. P. Esq. M. P.
Phelips, Edward, Esq. M. P.
Phelips, Mrs.
Pinfold, Mrs.
Plumer, William, Esq. M. P.
Prescott, George William, Esq.
Prichard, Rev. John
Prichard, Mrs.
Pechel, Charles, Esq.
Payn, James, Esq.
Payn, Mrs.
Proctor, Henry, Esq.
Proctor, Mrs.
Proctor, Mrs. Windsor
Peters, Rev. William
Price, Mrs.
Pomeroy, Hon. Henry, M. P. Dublin
Perryn, Rev. Richard
Parker, Mr. Sackville

R.

Reynell, Sir Richard, Bart.

Roberts,

Roberts, Rev. Dr. Prov. of Eton

Reed, Thomas, Esq.

Reeve, Miss

S.

Spencer, Right Hon. Lord Henry

Stanhope, Right Hon. Lady Catharine

Shuckburgh, Right Hon. Lady

Spencer, Rev. Mr.

Sawyer, ———, Esq.

Sawyer, Mrs. ———, } Haywood Lodge

Samler, Richard, Esq.

Samler, William, Esq.

Smith, Mr.

Smith, Mrs.

Smith, Miss

} Cole Green, Herts

Smith, Rev. John, Wendover

Shuttleworth, Rev. Charles, 2 sets

Smith, George Bradshaw, Esq.

Smith, Captain John

Small, Rev. Dr. Jos. Atwell, Bristol

Small, Mrs.

Stockdale, Rev. Percival

Smart, Baptist, Esq.

Shum,

Shum, George, Esq. }
Shum, Mrs. } 10 sets, Bedford Sq.

Slack, Thomas, Esq.

Slack, Mrs.

Stephenfon, Henry, Esq.

Shuttleworth, Mrs.

Scott, Mrs. General

Sadler, James, Esq. Bristol

Small, John, Esq. Cirencester

T.

Taylor, Edward, Esq.

Taylor, Mrs.

Taylor, Rev. Cecil, HammerSmith

Taylor, Mrs.

Totton, Stevens, Esq.

Turner, Charles, Esq.

Totton, Mr. Oriel College, Oxford

Totty, Rev. Mr.

Treacher, Mrs.

Taylor, Rev. T.

Thomegay, Mark, Esq.

Toler, John, Esq. M. P. Dublin

V. Vansittart,

V.

Vanfittart, Arthur, Esq.

Vanfittart, George, Esq. 2 sets

W.

Winchelsea, Right Hon. Earl of

Waterford, Right Hon. Marquis of, Dublin

Wolfe, Right Hon. Arthur, M. P. Dublin

Wrightson, William, Esq. M. P.

Webb, Richard, Esq.

Webb, Mrs.

Webb, Miss

Wilson, Rev. Mr. Prebendary of Windsor

Wilson, Mrs.

Watts, Isaac, Esq.

Watts, Mrs.

Willson, Hon. Mr. Justice

Willes, Rev. William

Willoughby, Christopher, Esq.

Whitmore, Rev. Mr.

Webster, Mrs.

Wells, Rev. Richard

Walker, Thomas, Esq. Redland, Bristol

Walker, Mrs.

Wilson,

(xlvii)

Wilson, Matthew, Esq.

Wathen, Mrs.

Person unknown

Ditto

Ditto

Ditto

(xlvii)

Willon, Matthew, Esq.

Watson, Mrs.

Person unknown

Ditto

Ditto

Ditto

The following Names did not come to hand
till the preceding List was printed.

Geo. M. Macaulay, Esq. Chatham Place.

Mrs. Macaulay.

Mark Gregory, Esq. M. P.

John Turnbull, Esq.

James Abel, Esq.

Rev. Auley Macaulay, Weybrook, Leicef-
tershire.

Rev. Robert Wilmot.

Mrs. Wilmot.

E. S. Sitwell, Esq.

Mrs. Sitwell.

The following names did not come to hand
with the preceding list was printed.

Geo. M. Macaulay, Esq. Chatham Place.

Miss Macaulay.

Mark Gregory, Esq. M. P. 09ES82

John Turnbull, Esq.

James A. B. Esq.

Rev. Andrew Macaulay, W. Brook, Esq.

Rev. Mr.

Rev. Robert Williams.

Mr. Williams.

E. S. Brown, Esq.

Miss Brown.

S E R M O N I.
O N B E N E F I C E N C E.

A Subject for the ASYLUM CHAPEL.

Non nobis solum nati sumus; ortûsque nostri partem patria vindicat, partem parentes, partem amici.

PLAT. apud CIC.

Vir bonus et sapiens dignis ait esse paratum. HOR.



S E R M O N I.

ISAIAH, xxxii. 8.

*But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and
by liberal things shall he be established.*

I HAVE selected a subject for your instruction this day, my brethren, which describes the most amiable and valuable character in human nature; and at the same time is big with a substantial promise of consequent reward.

The virtue of liberality, as implying a wise distribution of the good things of life, though not practised so universally and conscientiously in the world as christian precept requires, is yet too well understood by its benign influence within these walls, to need any laboured definition.

The important end and affecting objects of this charity, indicate the intrinsic

value of the word more forcibly than any exposition I can make. The beneficent mind needs only pay a visit to *this* spot, to have every accordant sensation tuned to the most harmonious pitch; and enjoy that rich feast of soul, which tender sympathy and generous relief are calculated to produce.—O happy people! were we duly sensible of the blessing of pious rulers, whose provident regard extends to the danger of friendless infancy; whose compassionate institution cannot but thrive under the patronage of a most diligent and respectable direction!

But though liberality in *another* sense, and especially christian candour, obliges us to judge favourably of every individual met together on this blessed day; yet it cannot be denied that the true spirit of piety is not always, as it ought to be, the leading principle that actuates outward compliance with religious duties.—The unhappy neglect of serious habits in the early part of education, is no ways friendly to a vital pursuit of holy exercises; and the cares and pleasures which unite to distract the inhabitants
of

of populous cities, together with the contaminating prevalence of high example, render self-examination very necessary in this particular, and supply *our* office with matter of pastoral remonstrance and exhortation.

As in all numerous assemblies, therefore, a variety of character must obviously be collected, I shall employ the time allotted me this day in such a discussion of the subject my text contains, as with God's blessing may, in some measure, benefit my several hearers.

The method I shall take to render my address perspicuous, will be,

First, To enlarge upon the character and conduct which the former part of the passage implies—"The liberal devise liberal things;" and,

Secondly, I shall exhort attention to the value of the reward—"By liberal things they shall be established." Which may help to stimulate the supineness of those who are less sensible to the impulse of this exalted virtue; and encourage and invigorate the perseverance of *others*, who have a more happy propensity

to generous pity, and munificent undertakings.

In treating this subject, the *contrast* of character will be necessary, to place the principal object in its just and strongest light; and, as I am an entire stranger in this place, no possibility of *personal* reference can be suspected; however professional duty might warrant similar notice (under due restriction) in a more confined capacity of parochial charge, and from a zealous desire of *particular* reformation, and an earnest support of the Divine laws.

The advantages of a truly beneficent temper are so satisfactory to their possessor, and so extensive in their promotion of public happiness, that no social virtue merits higher eulogium—is more pleasing to dwell on—or more needful to be enforced at all times, especially in so mixed and fluctuating an audience as is usually assembled in this place.

In the description of the character I would now recommend to all present, I here consider the term *liberal* as equivocal with *beneficent*: it varies in its present

sent acceptation from the sense in which it serves to signify refinement of sentiment, flowing from candid judgment and good breeding. The prophet uses it to denote a virtue of the *soul*, not a mere polish of *manners*. Liberality, or beneficence, is nearly allied to benevolence:— by the *first*, we understand an *active goodness*; the latter may exist where an efficient power is wanting; but the former presupposes the possession of the other, and necessarily includes them both:— and the proof the text asserts, of that degree of excellence attending every one so happily gifted, is, “that he deviseth liberal things.” In short, beneficence is our warrant that benevolence is a *sterling* principle; not an ideal and flattering persuasion that we have a claim to feelings which display the most lovely features of human nature, but which are mere transient effects of constitutional tenderness; which melt suddenly like wax at a quick heat, but harden again as soon, leaving no impression of virtuous efficacy: an observation which, by the way, should be a powerful incitement to

all who are visited even with *this* call to generous actions, not to let the gracious impulse cool, but to close with scriptural counsel, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." The enemy that useth constant vigilance to frustrate every hopeful endeavour, hath on his side the fallacious maxims of a selfish world to check the best of purposes; and leaves no art untried to prevent a habit of benevolence and mercy, knowing the sure and great reward such conduct is calculated to obtain.

To be truly beneficent, is to resemble, as far as mortals are enabled, that purity of deportment intimated in the command of "being perfect as he is perfect," who is the source of every disinterested virtue; who "maketh his sun to shine on all," but reserveth the choice though secret effects of preference to those devoted to his service, and zealous of his precepts. It is to imitate that superior excellence, which, in disseminating the most precious gifts, acquires to himself such ineffable delight, as reflects its own perfection, and impels successive action from the very contemplation

contemplation of increasing and inexhaustible power to do good.

Hence then we may infer, that this virtue is most pleasing to the Almighty ; for, in every pursuit that yields the highest satisfaction, *that* is most excellent which comes nearest to the original to which it owes its existence :—and a stronger demonstration cannot be given you, than, lest man should want an evidence of this truth, God has been pleased to establish it by revelation ; and, in the person of the most perfect man that ever appeared, he has proclaimed his approbation of this amiable character, by this powerful testimony, “ that it was his
“ meat and drink to do good to men.”

When therefore we have such a host of proof—the intrinsic value of the thing itself—the mighty happiness it is found to yield—Divine command—and our blessed Master’s confirmation of the expediency of its practice—it is almost incomprehensible how so slender a compliance with these combined inducements should mark the conduct of mankind in general. The only answer to be given
is,

is, the wretched consequence of a fallen state, which perverts the use of blessings to purposes of dishonour, and the increase of man's misery; instead of effecting his real good, and celebrating the glory of his Maker.

No stronger instance of this degeneracy need be shewn, than that we often see the properest object of humane regard remain neglected, and allowed to droop, from the very circumstance that should invigorate the exertion of a beneficent soul; as if it was not enough to be unfortunate, but that the additional calamity of wanting means to assist unwearied industry, and a virtuous conflict with misfortune, should strangely tend to deaden the beneficent impulse, in those abundantly able to soften every care, and rescue the obscured sufferer from accumulated severity of fate. But so it is; and often the very plea they unwarrantably cherish to excuse their aid, serves also (*contrary to all reason*) to induce them to discard the object of their just regard (because the case is singularly hard, and needs proportionable exertion!)—for, alas! the
sons

sons of affluence and power in general shun the miserable as they would a pestilence ; they rejoice not in the blessed occasion of adding immortal splendour to their present fame, by generously succouring the friendless ; but dread each mark of favour to this hapless tribe, as what would lessen that influence of worldly interest, which promises return of selfish consequence, and feeds a false ambition, and ignoble transitory importance. More hapless themselves at last, when riches, power, and talents shall only follow them with fruitless upbraidings of the waste and misapplication of these blessings—when they shall find themselves for ever separated from those once slighted fellow-creatures, who entreated but for some slender consolation, which the superfluity of their stock enabled them to bestow ; which never could have been missed, but would have yielded, at an unexpected and needful season, a soothing share of hope—when they shall be separated, not by a proud unfeeling *choice*, as now ; but by *necessity*, and the laws of endless fate : —“ for between them a great gulph is
“ fixed,”

“fixed,” which the consequence of a merciless career renders it impossible they can pass; while part of their sad retribution for the abuse of “their good things,” will be to view the blissful and immutable condition of those who in “their life time” “have suffered their evil things.” And though perhaps it may be better for them, in a view to future recompence, not to have their troubles *entirely* removed; yet the injunction of mercy, and the gift of power, positively decide that they should be *alleviated*: for in this consists the *trial* of the rich and powerful here, for the reward of peace and happiness hereafter.

But of all the conflicts to which the situation of the luckless is exposed, nothing is so injurious to their cause, and so aggravating to their griefs, as the malignant influence of *secret* calumny and malevolence. This is the most powerful engine of the Evil Spirit to urge the wounded sufferer to despair. How severely piercing this accumulation of affliction, is powerfully and beautifully set forth in the history of the patient Job. Even simple misrepresentation

tation often operates in such a variety of unfavourable shapes, and proceeds so frequently from unworthy motives, that its pernicious effects are hardly possible to be obviated, but by the commiserating hand of God's good providence; who, when his servants have been sufficiently tried in the furnace of affliction, sometimes makes a way for them to escape; even in *this* life vouchsafes them a breathing time of peace; exposes the treachery of false friends; most graciously affording, even to *them*, an opportunity for contrition and repentance; and, to the confusion of the most cruel and subtle enemies, unravels all the mazes of their selfish and unfeeling machinations. It is no uncommon case for the purest and most exemplary characters to be traduced through jealousy, and envy of their superior merit, and even to be loaded with the foulest and falsest aspersions. Scripture furnishes us with various instances of this; and in the traffic of this wicked life we meet with them too often.

There needs no stronger proof of the fall of human nature from its original
state

state of purity; than this diabolical tendency to slander, and a barbarous industry to defeat the good of others. This was the early fatal testimony of the apostate angel's depravity, as exhibited towards our first parents in a state of innocence, and which nothing but the opposite spirit of redeeming love can palliate or atone for.

Nay, even where there is some claim to expect good offices, how soon is the transient gleam of benevolent design withdrawn, if the most distant shade of partial interest interferes! How few have *heart* to speak the *merits* of an acquaintance, or justly satisfy enquiry after actual sufferings from a quarter where they look for any favour to themselves! In short, so narrow is the mind where self *alone* presides, so deficient is our composition to produce beneficent sincerity, that *he* discovers no small test of virtuous fortitude, who, when the *benefit* of his friend requires it, can *dwell upon his worth*. Nor is this any uncharitable or exaggerated review; for it cannot be otherwise; because it is an inherent property

perty of human nature to be actuated by that principle which is most prevalent in its composition ; and until men are brought to a conviction of what constitutes their *chief good*, which nothing but religious motives can *substantially* establish, they will necessarily be attracted by that rule which determines their own interest.

Having descanted sufficiently upon the darker and more disgusting part of my subject, I approach to the more pleasing task, which leads me to recur to the first division of the text.

By *liberal things* we are not only to understand a generous and cheerful distribution from that rich store of fortune with which the providence of God may have blessed us ; but any kind of exertion within our *power*, if bestowed from merciful consideration, and directed to valuable purpose, doth well deserve the very *best* construction the words can bear. It would curtail the greatest share of humane good-will, were we to confine the healing influence of the liberal soul to the mere bounty of *pecuniary* benefit ; though perhaps the quintessence of genuine

ine philanthropy can afford no surer test of its excellent spirit, than drawing upon this fund. Yet the *design*, the *manner*, the peculiar *disposition* of the donor, have all their separate and valuable degrees of estimation. We are justified in this remark from the declaration of him who was unerring in his judgment. "How hard is it," says Christ, "for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven!" Doubtless the observation could alone proceed from the *abuse* of that particular talent entrusted to his care; the *proper* use of which is calculated to assure the wealthy one of the highest stations there: for our blessed Lord, in tender regard to the case of the large multitude who compose this order, who otherwise might have been hardened in the selfish and improvident employment of their good things, applies this certain consolation, that "nothing was impossible to God:" and hence at once inculcates the danger of the trial, and the necessity of a constant and devout dependance on *his* aid, who is both the giver of the means, and solely able to prevent the heart from being corrupted

rupted by them; or to turn it to a right sense of feeling. But not to digress too far from the more immediate illustration of this part of my subject, there are other qualities of the mind, besides the noble disinterestedness now specified, which lay just claim to what is comprehended in the liberal character.—We shall not be accountable for what we want, or cannot spare to others; but only for what we *do* possess, and will not distress, but profit us to bestow: and where benevolence is destitute of the means to make a brilliant testimony of its worth, in *one* respect, it may employ some *other* equally beneficial to the object of its notice; and as satisfactory to its own conscientious assurance of dutiful acquiescence to the supreme injunctions, as the most splendid display of affluence can yield. If the sparing exertion is confined to *personal* bounty, we have the most sure and cheering word to ascertain acceptance of our best efforts—“Behold she hath thrown
“in more than they all;”—thus qualifying the nature of the gift by the purity

of the *intention* :—and in truth this test was materially valuable ; “ for they,” continues our Saviour, “ cast in from “ their abundance ;” but she, of her *all*, hath added a more grateful sacrifice of beneficent contribution to the treasury of indigence ;—a consideration which greatly aggravates the opposite reproach of those, who, even of their *abundance*, either grudgingly deposit the tribute of due acknowledgment to the Lord to whom they owe all they have ; or still more greedily withhold even the *literal* value of the widow’s mite, comparatively with their *means*.

O ye deluded sons of fortune ! trust not in uncertain riches, which will make to themselves wings, and leave you to the barren contemplation, and lacerating remorse, of your polluted souls, in that sad hour when these things will not profit you ;—but wisely make friends in time of the mammon of unrighteousness, that having sown the fruitful seed of beneficence, which vast possessions enable you to cultivate, they may finally receive
you

you into everlasting habitations, and yield a rich harvest in the day of reckoning for the many talents lent unto you.

If the gross clothing of flesh and blood drowns the loud calls of conscience;—if the force of evil habits restrains the dictates of liberality;—if the foul influence of general example seems to warrant your following a multitude to do evil;—if the seducing power of temptation, the false pleasure of vanity, and ruinous extravagance, unite to block up every avenue from admitting the claims of sorrowing application;—accept the recipe I will advise to break these several chains that would confine your better nature in a prison of worldly fascination. Go to the habitation of the *liberal*;—enter the courts of mercy;—and only draw a fair comparison of the different employments of their mind, from what intoxicates and transports your dissipated reflections:—ask the ready *deviser of liberal things*, what fresh returns he has experienced from the effect of generous bounty, or healing counsel;—what feast of thought he is anticipating in the pleasing prospect of a

favour to be conferred, through the successful intervention of his power;—and judge, from the modest testimony of his report, from the composure of his mind, and the pleasing images which visit his fancy, whether “the beneficent man is not satisfied with himself;”—whether the slave of fashionable extravagance, or the voluptuous promoter of sensual excess, or the restless rival of every dazzling splendour, which false and fickle taste can crowd upon him, is equally happy upon ingenuous confession;—or can boast the like degree of substantial and permanent pleasure in his pursuits.

To them, an occasional visit of liberal sollicitation wears the most unwelcome face;—it is a formidable tax upon the increase of numberless superfluities, which the mad rage for more, paints in forbidding colours:—and if perchance some symptoms of benevolent inclination still remain, the sparing tribute is reluctantly bestowed, its value vainly magnified through the pervading engrossment of selfish indulgence, and sometimes secretly estimated as an atoning composition for con-

scious prodigality. In truth, the ruinous habits of novelty and dissipation have rendered the actual wants of many so pressing, as to exclude all hope of generous ability; and, in a strict religious sense, persons of this description are become themselves (though from far different causes) the greater objects of commiseration.—But let us try a very different character—the really opulent and thrifty, whose clear possessions, and ready stock, mark a rich fund for beneficent purpose; and qualify the happy proprietor for securing such an inestimable reversion, as will exceed the mortgages of kingdoms. Doubtless, he has laid up treasures where nothing can endanger their decrease; but, on the contrary, the principal will be restored with such return of interest, as would glut the most exorbitant desire, surpassing the most extortionate production of usurious depredation, and promising an endless barter of the most profitable exchange. Doubtless, “he hath provided treasure in heaven:”—the ease with which he might procure so valuable an inheritance, argues

the wisdom of the purchaser. Let your own hearts ascend the judgment-seat;—where the conscience speaks favourably, persevere in well-doing—faint not—but pray continually for strength:—verily you shall have your reward, such as neither tongue or fancy can describe—the promise of the eternal God himself. If any of your hearts condemn you, apply in time this wholesome admonition of the divine counsellor—“Thou fool, this
 “night thy soul may be required of thee,
 “and then whose shall these things be
 “which thou hast provided?”—The property, perhaps, of some ungrateful prodigal; the source of every vicious indulgence; a temptation to join that infernal coalition of covetousness and profusion, whose monstrous alliance begat the most pernicious of wicked habits, and spreads such extensive and irreparable ruin, as causes horror often to record:—or perhaps it may revert to those you have every reason to despise; who will revel in the consequence of your unjust neglect of others, whose happiness you might *at last* have fixed, when forced to bid adieu
 to

to that abundance, which tendered ample means, while living, for your considerate protection, though then you wanted virtue to effect it; whereas the anguish of disappointed hope, augmented by years of flattering notice, will brand the memory with merited disgrace, and the execration of the injured. Not so the chosen few, who make plenty and beneficence the handmaids of each other; whose cordial alliance cannot fail to supply those exquisite pleasures I have already intimated. Let us then leave the *sordid* and *selfish* to themselves, the object in which they most delight; and take a view of that assemblage of ability and inclination which many elevated characters still possess.

When superiority of station doth not intoxicate the mind; when splendour does not so far dazzle as to exclude discernment of our duty; when the appendages of prosperity, instead of *steeling* the heart, contribute to evince its *sensibility*; and the insidious flatteries and various interests almost inseparable from the magnetism of pre-eminence, do not withhold

a favourable inclination towards *mèrit*; when fame, which seldom errs in magnifying *virtuous* efforts, tells us desert need only to be discovered, to assure assistance, however obscured by sinister events; where œconomy and provident wisdom tend to *increase* magnificence, and promote accession of influence, to the aggrandisement of an illustrious name, instead of entailing poverty and disgrace, by squandering opulence in riotous excess, or ruinous play; when the poor man does not sit at the gate of plenty, in fruitless expectation of “the crumbs that fall “from the rich man’s table,” but, from an exertion of considerate and tender notice, receives a bountiful and unsolicited supply from the overflowings of that abundance which the thoughtless and unfeeling suffer to be wasted, or appropriated to unworthy ends—in that line dignity may be expected to wait on hereditary honours, and blessings be perpetuated. The prayer of the needy and unfriended shall be heard for that man; in *him* the original Divine impression upon human nature seems to be retrieved; and, if I
may

may be permitted *ſo* to ſpeak, by ſuch a glorious diſplay of general and judicious benevolence, nobility is RE-ENNOBLED. In *ſuch* caſes it is not only delightful, but an incumbent office to catch an opportunity of holding up the fair example; and all that can be worthily objected, is want of ſkill to do the picture juſtice. Thank Heaven, there are ſtill ſome valuable originals of this grand deſign, whoſe praiſe, in this reſpect, exceeds my powers of deſcription. But as this is no more a place for perſonal panegyric than reproach, and all here mentioned is alone deſigned to countenance virtue and diſcourage vice, by exhibiting their natural *contrast*, as uſeful to that end—let what has been ſaid obtain a *general* application to *all* deſerving it; as likewise ſhould the oppoſite alluſion.—*This* inference cannot be denied, that they who are bleſſed with grace to employ their affluence in reſcuing the deſerving from that odium *indigence alone* too often caſts upon them, do thereby alſo promote the happineſs of thoſe humanity holds moſt dear—ties, which inſpire an exertion, and expedients, no OTHER motives

tives could ever reconcile. If any *such* are present, they have a claim to cherish the resemblance my humble talents have endeavoured to present them. And with a hearty congratulation of so valuable a possession, I shall conclude this portion of my subject, time not permitting me to proceed at present.

Now, &c.

S E R M O N II.

ON THE

S A M E S U B J E C T.

S E R M O N



T O S A M E

S E R M O N II.

ISAIAH, xxxii. 8.

*But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and
by liberal things shall he be established.*

IN the former part of my discourse I endeavoured to recommend the beauty and excellence of the beneficent character, by the help of such a contrast between those employing, or neglecting, their great power of doing good, as might strike the judgment, and invigorate practice.

It remains now, that I should proceed to enlarge upon a further description of the virtue my text commends; which, though it wants the potent aid of *wealth*, will furnish endless projects to fulfil its liberal devices. This heavenly temper abounds in means of gratifying its virtuous disposition towards mankind.

When

When other resources happen to fail, the intrinsic value of a diligent and uniform example of upright conduct, lends power to the kind of heart; and will often prevail with *some* to incline their ear to the generous persuasion of such an advocate. Engaging talents sometimes supply the value of our own personal efficiency, in influencing *others*; and have powerful weight in softening the natural tenaciousness of our acquaintance. Again, the assiduous eloquence, and resistless importunity, with which unwearied virtue is endued, prevail over many more; and that long extended chain of interests and connections, which Providence has constructed to prove the industry of the beneficent principle, holds out an almost infinite field for humane endeavour. What a lovely picture would the world afford—what a pleasing emblem of future perfection, and virtuous diligence, if each individual would only use the several modes beneficence will suggest of doing good!—And let this further consolation attend those several patrons, whose power and interest are essentially equivalent to the effects of wealth, that he who so blends judgment

judgment with magnanimity, as in the advancement of the depending, most serviceably to display the respective endowments of mankind—he is in a manner the *author* of those qualities, and the advantages attending their promotion; evinces virtuous sympathy for the neglected, and cannot too highly be extolled, both as a private and public benefactor.

Care and misfortune check the free current of intellectual excellence:—virtue in distress has the *first* pretension to liberal patronage: the most effectual advance to general reformation, is to make *religion* a step to preferment (at least to rescue it from the degradation of exigence), and irreligion and idleness a *bar* to it:—then will propriety and utility unite to govern favour; nor shall the voice of pining merit cry aloud in vain.

I will only trespass upon your patience with one more engine that will greatly help the visible effect of general beneficence; and that is, a minute and conscientious regard to every claim on *gratitude*. This is an assistant virtue of mighty influence to the cause before us: without it, no sound pretence

pretence to excellence of character can be maintained: and however fair the studied outside may appear, however artful polish may deceive, a neglect to cultivate this prime ingredient, leaves but a fruitless husk, when promising appearance is pressed to give full proof of innate worth.

So intricate is the maze of temporal dependencies, that few, if any, but might trace a score of credit to be balanced, from the incumbent duty of benevolent consideration; not only to those immediately our friends and benefactors, but to others whom the providence of God connects by a more distant link in the chain of human affairs; raising them up occasionally as conspicuous objects of generous regard; presenting them for the purpose of reminding us to whom we owe our *all*, and how he would be requited; or to fill up the measure of our delinquencies by such proud contempt, or unkind desertion of these probations of our virtue, as will justify the sentence of final condemnation.

But, like true children of the wicked author of this foul degeneracy in our nature, we are too apt to imitate the original,
and

and often rebel against the very hand that raised us. None are more warily shunned than those who, having been less fortunate, may need protection. So deceitful is the human heart, and so little do men know themselves, that we may venture to affirm, that if, during the uncertain budding of this life's hope, a bare suspicion should be hazarded between two friends, that the rapid growth of worldly favour, instead of proving beneficial to grateful remuneration, would ultimately eradicate the remembrance of the *present ties*, and discard that precious ornament of character; it is most natural that Hazael's speech would instantly occur to the uncontaminated party, in just rebuke of such unfair surmise—*What! am I a dog*, that I should thus degenerate?—But, alas! experiment daily proves the fact; and confirms the observation of the poet, that “prosperity spoils ten, for one it mends:” where, if the sense and measure of the line could have met together, he might have spoken a fuller truth, and substituted *thousands* with equal safety; for adversity, according to some author, *tries*, but prosperity *shows* the man. The mind is often over-

set by a succession of propitious contingencies; sycophants and flatterers take place of old alliances, and private friendships; and there are many reasons to account for change of character and deportment, all resolvable in the common weakness and corruption of our nature. Man, like the grand apostate, would owe *all* to his own sufficiency, or merit: pride is the deadly source, however disguised, that generates this odious quality; humility is the only antidote:—we should attribute every success to God's permission, and direction of events; and imitate his universal bounty in the exercise of our delegated powers.

Ingratitude is not a failing peculiar to the lower class of people; it pervades all nature: it is too memorable, and should put all ranks upon their guard, that the *first* character that exhibited its foul effect, was once the highest and brightest of the angelic order. In short, every station, however elevated or depressed, should shew their bounden gratitude to God; and there is no mode more pleasing to him (as his own word declares), nor more productive of substantial happiness to ourselves, than beneficent exertion

exertion towards his creatures. And if through his gracious providence he hath enabled us to become his stewards of that protection, comfort, or support, of which so many of our brethren stand in need; we should be cautious to direct our power, by a grateful, just, and *religious* rule; and not by humour, partiality, or improper influence.

If, therefore, vigorous efforts were once made to lessen this *single* blot, there would be fewer instances of misery amongst us; this precious plant would naturally extend itself; and from grateful recollection, grateful homage would ensue.

I shall close this portion of the subject with only one more incitement to provoke our emulation of this virtue, and hasten the conclusion of the whole.

It cannot, without extreme injustice, be denied that, in the culture of this heavenly virtue, the conduct of the female sex exposes *our* remissness to the highest degree of shame. Ingenuous regret establishes this further truth, that but for *their* example the cause of piety in general would want its best support.

If in the primeval state of innocence they were created to improve our bliss, much more were they ordained in mercy to soften that flood of consequent calamity and care, that should attend the fall. And now, as if combined in generous effort to repair original error, they gratefully and piously excel in cultivating the blessed means provided for our joint recovery, and endless happiness. Their superior regard for holy religion, and the application of that proffered grace which tends to vindicate the value of Divine prediction in their favour, proves happily instrumental in checking the apostacy that would otherwise prevail, to the greater subversion of all devotional habit. Thus, by cherishing the expediency of the remedy, they help to subdue the worst infection of the evil.

We on the contrary seem, as it were, with desperate rashness, to exert our industry to obstruct their wise and virtuous progress. Instead of emulating their valuable example, we contribute to contaminate their manners; we endeavour to laugh down their zeal; and thus opposing our best happiness, we at once establish our own depravity,

vity, and their superior virtue. For what a slender test of christian sincerity would appear, if in female practice proportionable disregard was paid to public worship, and other devotional duties, as is shewn to them by men! *We*, who as lords of this lower world, as the choicest product of creative power on earth—we, should set the first example of that best mark of wisdom, *godly fear*. From man it may be well expected to supply, by noble precedent, every help, that more vigorous faculties and superior opportunities of improvement give *them* a right to challenge from us. But how different is the case on observation!—Though the means afforded to enrich their minds are slender in comparison with ours, and in general their education rather inimical to the encouragement of mental excellence, they frequently far eclipse, from genuine and peculiar cast of genius (assisted merely by private industry), that sex, who from their earliest years are grounded in the principles of science and sound learning.

Although the sage precepts of “Remembering the Creator in the days of our youth,” and “training up a child in the

“ way he should go,” are now become as low in modern estimation, as obsolete in general practice ; yet, where they still retain a happy influence, to which sex are we most indebted for any early religious sentiments, habit, or example ?—How few of us can date the early impressions of christian duty to the unwearied lectures of a *father's* diligence, *comparatively* with what we have received from maternal circumspection in this grand article of valuable education !—Gratitude for the best foundation of all good, exacts this just acknowledgment. It is to the exemplary influence of *female* piety over their several connections, that we may attribute a great degree of that respect to stated worship which still exists amongst us : and the accession to every congregation is also so far in favour of *their* sex, that if the general testimony of their appearance was withdrawn, the vacant seats would afford sad proof of disregard to the most solemn obligations ; the slender shew of heads would announce too manifestly the increased depravity of the *heart*.

In the attendance upon that celebrated rite which marks so *positively* any essential progress

progress in the christian faith, and outwardly confirms our sincerity to own the title we profess to bear, *we* shall again fall greatly short in the number of God's female servants, and devout communicants.

• In any cause of pity, trouble, or distress, which of the two sexes shall we find most willing and strenuous to deal out benevolent relief, either in personal exertion, or the persuasive influence of their irresistible *solicitations*?—so ready in their sympathy, so disinterested in their counsel.

Should it wear the least appearance of singularity, that I have dwelt so long upon the comparative merits of the sexes, both in religious and sentimental proficiency, perhaps an earnestness to support this truth will procure your candour, when I adduce my own warm feelings as the principle that urges this just eulogium of female worth; having through life experienced every thing most valuable in it from the care, friendship, talents, and good wishes, of many of that part of God's creation; which in the overflowings of his love towards his creature man, he formed to prove the greatest solace of his future troubles and disappoint-

ments; the most faithful and soothing support to the end of all his trial. The requital on *our* part too often proves injurious to the object it is our highest interest and duty to protect, and eminently disgraceful to ourselves; the many errors in their education, and frequently the cruel neglect and bad example they are subjected to in maturer life, augments our reproach, and is as injudicious as ungenerous. If, as the sublimest of our poets elegantly speaks, “Beauty is excelled by manly grace and wisdom, which alone is fair,” let us assert our *right* to the distinction, and “*prove* ourselves pre-eminent by so much odds in virtuous excellence:”—“and since like consort to ourselves we can nowhere find,” let us not invert the order of nature, and to effeminacy add *ignominy* of conduct. But if “from the influence of their looks, access in every virtue may be derived,” as the same author asserts, let looks and bright example unite to shame our own degeneracy, and win us over to a due dependance on the mighty Author of our mutual being.

Wherefore, persist ye christian mothers,
wives,

wives, and sisters, in meriting the glorious palm due to the upholders of religion's sacred power. By the continuance of diligent example in your respective stations, and efficacious precept, stem the overwhelming torrent of dissipation and infidelity;—correct, by pious perseverance, the fatal decline of religious habit, which so universally prevails, and will still increase, to the possible ruin of those *most dear to you*, unless your counteracting resolution dictates just shame at the degeneracy.

I shall now conclude this long trespass on your patience, with a short exhortation to attend to the encouragement of *reward*, as specified in the latter sentence of the text: “By liberal things they shall be established.” The apostle speaks to much the same effect in II. Corinth. chap. v. ver. 6: “He that soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully.” And we need only open the volume of God's word, and something abundantly pertinent will present itself upon the subject of a valuable recompence to the merciful or beneficent man. Two as general and engaging passages as can be instanced, to work upon the
7 feelings

feelings of human nature, and in a manner synonymous to the assurance in the text, are, "That the merciful man doth good to
 " his own soul, and leaveth an inheritance
 " to his family." The *first* touches us in the nicest principle of our constitution, the most essential concern, being the happiness of *that* part which is to *live for ever*; the *other* has likewise a most affecting tendency, and possesses a degree of attraction, which none but a very bad man indeed can resist.

Finally, I will shew you yet a better way—"Whatsoever ye would that men
 " should do to you, do ye the same to
 " them; for this is good and acceptable
 " to the Lord." This is that golden rule which directed the example of our blessed Lord himself, whose eminent distinction was, "that he went about doing all manner of good." His beneficence was not limited to his friends; it extended to his bitterest enemies. Would that we studied his example and precepts so effectually, as even to imitate him in the *first* display of our power and ability! we might then hope, in time, to advance to still higher degrees of christian perfection. But while
 we

we continue indifferent to the value of the several pretensions to our favour; are liberal to those that abound, or want virtuous plea, and neglectful of the *needy* and *worthy* claimant, we shall be found not only deficient in effecting the good within our reach, but even doing mischief, by misemploying the talents lent us for the best of purposes; not only wasting, but perverting the means of promoting happiness.—It should afford matter of most substantial consolation and encouragement, that the rational pursuit of this heaven-born virtue of beneficence, is the never-failing criterion of our having the above blessed principle effectually alive in us. It is a precept of such transcendent excellence, that when our works are tried by its unerring standard, every appearance of adulterous alloy gives way; and in the nature of a general resolvent it refines the whole mass, absorbing the essence of the most destructive quality it contains, and converting it to the purest good: for even SELF, when softened by a visit of charitable influence, and its own law (AS THOU Wouldest BE DONE BY), is made the measure of establishing the
highest

highest personal recompence;—even *self*, I say, does *then* become as strong an instrument of universal good, as (independent of religious impulse) it was before of narrow partiality. Nothing affords a more convincing argument of this truth, than the above conditional motive; which supplies an instance, in *one* respect, of qualifying interested affection by christian principle.—This is a maxim which, if adhered to, will prevent us from ever erring; it being so clear, so close, and so efficient in its direction, that besides the sanction of its blessed Author for our adopting of it, it regulates so justly every beneficent exertion, that it leaves no room for murmuring or regret.—And now, having taken some pains to establish it as the perfect measure of all benevolent deportment, I will relieve you, with this valuable and earnest exhortation, GO, AND DO THOU LIKEWISE.

Now, &c.

S E R-

S E R M O N I I I .

A

VISITATION SERMON.

Circumspect example, and sound doctrine, essentially necessary in the discharge of the ministry.

Etiam hoc rogantur singuli, ne inutile detineant talentum sibi concreditum: sed omnem impendant operam, ut alios Christo acquirant: quam ad rem non tantum adhibendos rectos salutareque sermones, sed et emendatæ vitæ exemplum; ut ex servis de bonitate Domini, et ex actionibus de legis puritate, iudicium fiat.”

GROTIUS.

Respicere exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo
Doctum imitatore—et veras hinc ducere voces.

HOR.



S E R M O N III.

I. TIMOTHY, iv. 16.

Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine, and continue in them; for, in doing this, thou shalt save both thyself, and them that hear thee.

THE holy apostle here delivers a charge, that equally concerns every minister of the gospel; and doubtless it was intended for instruction and advice to the clergy, in all succeeding ages of the church.

I shall treat the subject under three distinct heads:

First, The injunction to Timothy, as to *himself*.

Secondly, As it relates to his *doctrine*.
And,

Thirdly, I shall consider what delightful or sad consequences will necessarily flow,

flow, from pursuing or neglecting the apostle's counsel.

We shall do well then to observe, my brethren, that Saint Paul in the order of his exhortation, gives the first place to a regard to *ourselves*—"take heed to thyself"—as the main foundation on which any valuable or permanent work can be raised; if due attention is not paid to this, every other labour will prove fruitless. The bright example set us by our blessed master, the conduct of his immediate followers, and indeed of all who have earnestly devoted themselves to the work of the ministry, display the wisdom and necessity of this caution. It will be perfectly consistent therefore with the import of the apostle's words, and I hope as suitable to the occasion of our present meeting, to take a general view of the department he means to enforce by them.

It is certainly a custom founded in strict propriety, that the clergy of the district should alternately contribute in assisting their visitor upon these occasions, if it affords matter of relief or satisfaction to him. But as I believe, originally, even this portion

tion of the duty was discharged by the archdeacon, under the idea of being his representative in this place, I shall beg leave to address you, my brethren, rather in the style of a superior, for the time present, than as one feeling himself, in the *strictest* sense, unequal to this respectable assembly, either in point of abilities to inform, or authority to exhort.

But to my subject. This epistle, I scarce need tell you, abounds in the choicest particulars of instruction; and whoever studies it with sincerity of heart, and a view to make it a pattern of his practice, cannot possibly fail of exhibiting a fair example. The value for our calling, will best appear from the purity of our lives; without which test, we shall possess the most brilliant talents to no saving purpose.

There is no character which requires more perfection, than that of a divine, and necessarily, none is attended with greater difficulty: and, as with all the advantages of education, after the utmost efforts to assure a good report, we must still be considered as *men*, and in many points the *best* are deficient; it concerns us the more, to

implore that assistance, which will enable us effectually to do honour to our situation : at the same time, all under our care, are bound to make every allowance for human frailty ; as in God's mercy they must expect it for themselves, even after their best diligence to follow the lessons they have received from the affectionate and unwearyed labours of their teachers.

The present state of the church is differently circumstanced from what it was in the apostle's time, and for ages after ; and it may perhaps admit of a licence in many articles of *exterior* concern, which, in the earlier ages of christianity, from the profane and heathenish practices of the nations, and the positive necessity of more rigid manners, could not be indulged, consistent with the spirit of reformation from the cloud of errors which overwhelmed our *particular* church, and the weakness and prejudices of human nature, and the times. Yet every true believer will lament, that the change has too manifestly pervaded even many essential particulars of religion ; I fear, upon investigation, this would be found a fatal truth, and the source of every natural calamity

calamity we experience. But truth and holiness are immutable things in their nature; and that order of men who are eminently appointed to teach the one, and practise the other, cannot be too assiduous in defending and embellishing the leading characteristics of their profession: when the apostle therefore says, "Take heed to thyself," he must chiefly have in view the manner of life he would recommend to his disciple; and to this I shall confine myself at present.

Now as we are to use our *reason* in judging of the propriety of our actions, we shall certainly find that noble faculty always on the side of *conscience*; and of the greatest advantage in framing such a line of conduct as will increase a veneration of the Deity, and produce satisfaction to ourselves. As it is the highest possible honour that can be conferred on man, to be appointed God's vicegerent, common sense must maintain the expediency of appropriating a becoming dignity to the exalted title. If in the natural and political order of things, we trace evident signs of a regular subordination, and relative respect of character, and are taught that the same decorum is preserved in Heaven,

can any better arguments be adduced in support of this distinction, under the most important of all trusts, *the care of men's souls*?

In the common traffic of life, every man must know and feel, that a failure of respect to himself, curtails him of that just authority and beneficial influence, which his occasional situation might otherwise command; and the cause will hold much stronger as applied to more elevated rank and honourable professions; a nice regard to character then ought to be peculiarly attended to in the clerical order: and as the office of a divine, from its immediate relation, exceeds all other vocations in becoming respect; whenever it is degraded, experience continually shews, that the person and profession are united sufferers. I plead for this consequence, merely as one natural means of promoting our holy cause; nor will any sensible person understand me to speak but of *such* a deference to station, of *such* a dignity of office, as is essentially conducive to that end, and as wholly divested from pride, insolence, oppression, or any unbrotherly deportment,

as vulgarity, imposition, and all illiberality, are foreign to the character of a gentleman.

The transition now becomes easy to the *causes* that may depreciate this character. St. Paul informs us, in the Second Epistle to Tim. ch. ii. ver. 4, “ that no man who war-
 “ reth entangleth himself with the affairs
 “ of this life, that he may please him who
 “ hath chosen him to be a soldier.” If this must be allowed a proper circumspection in one fighting for the honours of the world, it must more nearly concern the christian soldier, to be free of all encumbrances and attachments, as having a much more interested and arduous warfare to accomplish. And we are expressly ordered by the same apostle “ not to set our af-
 “ fections on things on earth, but on things
 “ above,” lest we should yield to any unprofessional temptations, which, as men of like passions with our brethren, we might constitutionally lean to, if off our guard; *i. e.* not to be so entangled with the business or pleasures of life, as to “ neglect
 “ the prize of our high calling,” or engage in them further than agreeable with

a reasonable provision for ourselves and family, or the prudent care of our common affairs. The custom of our church and country admits the clergy to a free participation in the comforts of society : a liberty, if not abused, that would bid fair to be productive of general benefit ; for it is reasonable to expect, that the exemplary deportment of the more serious character, should tend to oppose and moderate the overwhelming torrent of degeneracy and vice.

But here is the very post of difficulty and danger, of victory or disgrace : for if any should indulge the above freedom injudiciously, venturing out of the depths of security, not making a manly stand, to discharge the duty of good soldiers to their blessed master, disdaining the armour he recommends, and affords to those who are contented not to trust wholly in the naked arm of their own strength ; they will inevitably be hurried by the violence of the stream, and augment the baneful influence of the spreading contagion. And however painful to assert, it is to this incautious licence we must attribute the unnatural junction

tion of the grave and the giddy, so disgracefully conspicuous in all public scenes of folly and dissipation. Is it not equally alarming as disgusting, that any of our order should be so lost to all sense of dignity, decency, and manly spirit, as to ape the dress, manners, and pursuits of the very lowest descriptions of men? Yet this is matter of frequent observation and complaint, through a too studied approximation to what is called the *sporting character*. Indeed, so common is it, in these times, to disguise all pre-eminence of rank, that, in the metropolis, it is often difficult to discriminate, by their garb, the highest from the very lowest orders of men; and in what we term the polite and fashionable circles, it is become an enviable accomplishment to sink, as much as possible, all distinction of age and rank in point of appearance; and *trim* to the prevailing mode of thoughtless striplings, whose highest object is to raise the admiration of the day, at their vain and extravagant singularity.

It must not be denied, but that innocent amusements are allowable to all men, as a necessary relief from weightier employ-

ments. But good sense, and a just deference to character, will select such only, as are suitable to respective ranks, ages, and professions; and grievously must it affect the serious part of mankind, if they see those, whose peculiar calling is to decry vice and immorality, and to strive at extirpating them, become in any shape their abettors, either in public or private. And as far as our connivance tends to countenance an excess of gaming (that most pernicious of all social evils), or that we live in close and constant habits with men of loose and profligate principles, the indignant and alarming language of the Psalmist may be very justly applied: “ But
 “ unto the ungodly, said God, why dost
 “ thou preach my laws, and take my covenant in thy mouth? When thou sawest
 “ a thief, thou consentest unto him, and
 “ hast been partaker with the adulterers.”

Self examination is the approved way to form an estimate of our manners, and shew the state of the heart. Permit me to try by the measure of Saint Paul's maxims, a few particulars of most important investigation.

Should

Should any then be found, who, instead of using the utmost diligence to reclaim the sinner, and their best efforts to relieve the afflicted and distressed, are more anxious for the splendour and pleasures of this world, and readier to “ compass land and sea ” after a profitable bargain ; such may fairly be pronounced “ lovers of pleasure more “ than lovers of God ; ” nor “ vigilant,” in the apostle’s sense, but discovering too fond a partiality “ for filthy lucre.” If there are any who, though blessed with health and strength, are yet too indolent to do *any* work in the Lord’s vineyard—such, the apostle would not term “ apt to teach,” or in the “ way to gain any good report “ of them that are without ; ” for, as to professional merit, we must conclude “ that “ talent hid in the earth.” Let the counsel of the apostle, then, be our common rule : “ To the elder, to avoid covetousness, and “ the forbidden love of money, which is “ the root of all evil ; and let the youngest “ flee youthful lusts ; and all of us follow after righteousness, faith, charity, “ peace ; that the man of God may be perfect,

“ fect,

“fect, thoroughly furnished unto all good
“works.”

And as the servant of the Lord is exhorted to be gentle unto all men, let us be no less so in our demeanour to one another, considering the occasional situation of our assistants and representatives as the most happy trial of our generosity, benevolence, and brotherly love; esteeming them as *joint labourers* in the same blessed work, not as *earthly servants*: for as distinction in point of fortune may be the distinction only of a *day*—is intrinsically of the lowest consideration, compared with superior attainments, in which they may equal, or excel—so the humblest curate in the kingdom has as respectable a post to maintain, and may assure as illustrious a reward, as the highest prelate of the church; “for God is no
“respector of persons.”

We cannot be too wary or zealous to support a title so truly venerable, in all ages, countries, and religions. Beset as we are by men and dangers of all descriptions, we must endeavour “to be wise as serpents, and innocent as doves.” If it is
our

our lot to be placed in humble stations at present, let us wait advancement with patience and resignation; if we are reproached for singularity, by any “who have not the fear of God before their eyes,” on account of our piety, vigilance, or exemplary discharge of duty, let us bear with meekness the foolish scorn of scoffers, “looking to the greatness of the reward; knowing that all who live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution; that the servant is not greater than his Lord.” Let us persist then to instruct the ignorant, reprove the profane, comfort the afflicted, and encourage the penitent; that, when “our Lord cometh, we may be found watching.”

And this leads me to consider another part of the apostle’s advice—“to take heed also unto our doctrine.” The short but comprehensive rule given by St. Paul, (II. Timothy, chap. iv. ver. 2), is “to preach the word.” And he says further, “that the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.” The prophecy seems too amply verified in the present times.

There are two classes of people who

are constantly at variance upon this point. They both seem mistaken ; and their error proceeds from the same cause—what the apostle terms “having itching ears.” The *one* will bear nothing but the beauties of the moral system, recommended by the richest dress, and all the pride of human eloquence ; and if the gospel, or its divine Author, be introduced as objects of main regard, they immediately conclude their pastor is run wild. The *other* side, impressed with the necessity of having the *gospel preached*, idly conceive an irresistible spirit will attend them in their devout wishes, and that an ardent desire is all in all ; whereas no aid is promised but upon condition of earnest, constant labours, and supplications to obtain it : for we are told that, by not using the appointed means, “we both grieve, and may quench the Spirit.”—And thus, if a minister was implicitly to follow the various sentiments and fancies of the unstable multitude, it would be impossible to render a sensible account of his commission.

Avoiding therefore all *extremes*, the surer path will be the middle way ; keeping to
a rule

a rule that is free from all error, *i. e.*
 “ using sound speech that cannot be con-
 “ demned; that he who is of a contrary
 “ part may be ashamed, having no evil to
 “ say of you.”—I will endeavour, in the
 shortest manner I am able, to define what I
 humbly conceive to be “ sound doctrine:”
 and, in two words, I might securely pro-
 nounce it the doctrine of our own church—
 the doctrine of the scriptures; for that
 must be the purest which is drawn imme-
 diately from the fountain head, and has not
 gathered imperfection by passing through the
 channels of human illustration. In these, I
 say, the simple saving spirit is surest to be
 found.

We have the strongest proof, from the
 whole tenour of God’s word, that the prin-
 ciple of pure religion is love. That the
 Christian faith is founded on an article that
 demonstrates this in the highest degree—
 the redemption of mankind: “ For that
 “ whilst we were sinners Christ died for us.
 “ Greater love than this cannot be shewn:
 “ and, if he loved us first, we ought to love
 “ him; and, if we love him, we shall keep
 “ his commandments.”

The

The fall of our first parents reduces us, by our present state of nature, to continual inclination to evil: "we are born in sin, " and the children of wrath." In the promise of a Redeemer, the principle of a new life was there conveyed to us. We became children of grace, *i. e.* children of the free favour of God: "by grace there-
 " fore we are saved," both as to the new power given to us to will what is good, and become new creatures; and also by the continual assistance we stand in need of to forward our salvation; of which we have a faithful promise, if we ask it in a humble sense of our necessities, and use the appointed means to obtain it. It is most truly termed *free grace*; for, as being children of disobedience, we could have no *claim* to it, having forfeited the original gift, our *innocence*. This is the spirit, I humbly apprehend, that should animate our doctrine. This is the form of "sound words the apostle recommends, which will resist gainfayers."

It has been remarked by many good men, and most orthodox believers, that the effectual way of recalling the strayed sheep of our flocks, and of checking the daily progress

progress of *schism*, would be oftener to employ the voice of the chief shepherd: and I would not mention this, but that I am informed the experiment has been tried in places intoxicated with methodism, and that the most desirable consequences have ensued.

We bear the name of Christians, and we should be proud of the title; “for there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved,” but *his* after whom we are called: but we shall be found to renounce both the relation and the benefits, if we do not *preach him* who hath purchased them for us. I am inclined, upon the above report, and my own experience, to believe, that many well-disposed people reading of a Saviour, and feeling the want of one, yet but seldom hearing him held forth to them in the manner promised and explained in scripture, are at first induced, with a view of seeking him elsewhere, to quit the bosom of their own excellent church, and stray into the wilderness of perplexing dissention: thus they become a prey to the unsettled notions and unsafe doctrines of unqualified teachers; by whose arts;

arts, and at whose will, they are led captive. Many weak, more ignorant, most incapable of judging, they are deceived by an affecting shew of sanctity in the preacher, the promulgation of doctrines flattering to the indolent Christian, or wilful sinner; the bold presuming manner of address, set off by an acquired facility of repeating passages of scripture; and a captivating familiarity towards the audience, founded upon a plausible concern for their greatest happiness. Hungry and thirsty after the assurance of their salvation, they greedily imbibe what will puff up, and never satisfy; and thus many of the better-hearted, finding themselves no ways improved in holiness of life, are perplexed in the extreme, and often fall victims to the weakness of their mental powers, and constitutional habits; or, which is sometimes the more happy case, when convinced of the slender perfection of their new guides, their want of due authority, and the insufficiency of the doctrine, through experience of their continued imperfections, they are more ready to return, than they were to leave the fold, when they hear there is abundance of substantial food.

food. This, I am apt to believe, is the case in some places, and it deserves serious attention; for I apprehend, should a pauper die (in search of the necessaries of life) through the neglect of the overseers, who might have prevented the cause of his quitting home, his life, in a conscientious view, must lie at *their door*.—The application is easy.

Though the present age abounds with scandalous licentiousness, and slender as the cultivation of religious habits may appear, there are yet a happy number “who have “not bowed the knee to Baal.” It is our province, my brethren, to *increase* the number; but we must not hope for success, till we employ an adequate method to obtain it.

The policy of our holy church encourages the universal study of God’s word. Therein men see what they ought to hear and follow; the gift of natural reason conveys proportionable light for this: when they exert these powers, and make sober enquiries as to their state in this world, and what it may be in the next—when their minds are improved and settled by observation, and a just estimate of the things around them—when they see the end of bad men,

or their posterity, and read of the sure rewards of the righteous—they are prepared to receive the benefit of sound doctrine, and they naturally look for it.

The advantages of virtue are self-evident; but the most lively representations of its excellence will not *alone* yield food sufficiently salutary for the souls of men. The most obvious question will occur—Were the scriptures written to prove this only?—The beauty of virtue may excite a *wish* of imitation; but how are men to attain to the *possession* of it, when by a long and sad experience they perceive so little progress (barely from such a doctrine) either in the lives of their neighbours, their own endeavours, or perhaps the example of the instructor himself?—No; we must plant deeper, if we will secure against the storms of temptation, and the many potent adversaries we have to combat, both within and without. Men are all of the same nature, and insufficient of themselves. “Without me,” saith the Master, “ye can do nothing.” If such instruction does but little profit those *best* qualified to improve by it, what advancement can the *unlearned* expect?

pect? The most beautiful, the most perfect moral essays, dressed in all the charms of elegant composition, and delivered with the most engaging eloquence, is still but preaching in an *unknown tongue*, to a very large portion of hearers; and I fear will never be found to work any essential change in an *habitual transgressor*. No—to produce any probable good, we must speak to the *heart*, and to the capacity; we must aim at approaching the definition of scripture excellence, “that he who runs may read.” From this inexhaustible treasure we should supply subjects to exercise our application, learning, and abilities: they afford ample provision for the task; they contain “milk “ for the weak, and meat for the strong,” which must be administered occasionally, at the discretion of the teacher, and as necessity requires.

But in order to preach the scriptures to *saving* purpose, we must *understand* them: for doubtless “great is the mystery of god-
“ linefs;” and to what schoolmaster can we so safely go, as to *him who gave them*—who has so commanded us—who is “the
“ light and the life?” To Jesus Christ,

the blessed author of our religion—to him we must apply to enlighten our understandings: “for the natural man receiveth
 “ not the things of the spirit of God; they
 “ are foolishness to him, neither can he
 “ know them, because they are spiritually
 “ discerned.”

The apostles themselves knew nothing of the essence of their religion, till their Master, having *accomplished* his work, bestowed on them a power that *opened their minds*: and he declared he would be with them to the end of the world (*i. e.* with all his true disciples, who were sensible of their want of him, and his light), in all successive ages of the world to continue this aid to them, in the measure they have need, provided they ask, and seek, and knock for it. Not that this does imply any enthusiastic inspiration, or *compulsatory influence*, from an arbitrary predilection of *particular* persons, to the exclusion of *others*: for the appointed means are held out by St. John as *general*; and incontestibly prove our own free powers to receive or to reject Divine grace; the necessity even of our own exertions; and that the spiritual help, without which

which every other labour is incomplete, follows the conditions as a retributory consequence: "If any will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." When practice and saving knowledge go hand in hand, the most happy effects will follow.

I shall close this head of my discourse with the apostle's exhortation to us, to persevere both in holiness of life, and soundness of doctrine—"Continue in them." Let neither our example or our precepts be the temporary effects of accidental contrition, or occasional advice; but an uniform, diligent labour, founded upon the conviction of the truth, the love of God, and an humble dependance upon his gracious assistance. "Then may we hope to save both ourselves and them that hear us;" which, according to the prescribed division of my text, is the last particular I have to speak to.

The momentous import of these last words, my brethren, involves a subject that so deeply concerns us *all*, that the bare mention of them commands the most serious attention. When we dwell upon this hope as an object of awful reflection, it must

rouse us from the lethargy of worldly delusion, and awaken an activity *to redeem the time, lest night overtake us*, and our task scarce begin.

But if we have faithfully copied the pattern set us, not building upon our own, or other foundation but that which Christ himself hath laid; though our work be not *complete*, yet, when our gracious Master calls it in, he will allow a bountiful proportion for our humble share in its produce.

If it is the happiest service of the heavenly inhabitants to be employed in benevolent offices, as “being all ministering spirits, watching continually over the righteous;” if it is the peculiar character of our blessed Saviour “to go about doing good;” if it is the constant impulse of our own nature to seek good for ourselves;—what examples and incitements are these, “to cultivate that good part which shall not be taken from us!” But when we consider that essential virtue in ourselves will necessarily operate in the communication of it to others, the duty becomes more binding: by rendering the happiness of our fellow-creatures dependant upon our purest gratifications,

gratifications, our joy, even here, receives all the completion an imperfect state will admit; it assimilates us, in a degree, to the fountain of all good, to God himself; who, being all perfection, can suffer nothing to approach him but what is perfect, and happy in its kind.

Now as the comparison between heaven and earth, between time and eternity, will bear no proportion; so the good done to the *souls* of men, surpasses every possible degree of temporary benefit we can bestow upon them, as the light of the gospel transcends the light of the sun; "for whosoever turneth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death." What a transporting prospect breaks before us! the joy of heaven over repenting sinners!

If the escape of *one* soul from the slavery of death excites the joy of angels, what profusion of delight must that happy spirit taste hereafter, who has been instrumental here to the saving *many* sinners!

What a precious antipart of his eternal state, to meet the united exultation of holy angels, and just souls made perfect! What increase of rapture, to hear the well-known

voices of his redeemed friends, loudest in the choir, from grateful gratulations!—The solemn welcome done, what consummate bliss to see the Lamb himself, and have pronounced that animating sentence of wondrous love and bounty, “ Well done, “ good and faithful servant! enter into the “ joy of thy Lord !” But these are low, weak, and unworthy representations of the glorious ceremony. And how indeed should human powers paint these scenes which we are told, by one blessed with the vision, “ neither human eye hath seen, nor ear “ heard, nor can it enter into the heart of “ man to conceive them !”

The *reverse* of the picture excites ideas so painful, so big with horror, that I cannot proceed; I must drop the curtain upon that hopeless scene, and leave the recorded denunciation of the dread Judge himself against the *unprofitable servant*, to work its intended good effect—which God grant it may, both on myself and all who hear me, through the meritorious pleading of Jesus Christ, and the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit; to whom, with the Father, One God blessed for ever, be ascribed all dominion and praise. Amen.

S E R-

S E R M O N I V.

On the Expediency of redeeming the Time,

On all important TIME, thro' ev'ry age,
Tho' much, and warm, the wise have urg'd; the man
Is yet unborn, who duly weighs an hour, YOUNG.

——— We take no note of time
But from its loss. To give it then a tongue
Is wise in man. I^B.

Is death at distance? No: he has been on thee,
And given sure earnest of his final blow. I^B.

IV. S E R M O N

On the Expediency of Reducing the Time.



On all important things, it is
I no more, and when the war is over, the
Expediency, who only weigh in their

— We take no more of time
But for it is, to give it then a longer

I wish to know, how long it is
And give the best of it, to know

S E R M O N IV.

JOHN, ix. 4.

*I must work the works of him who sent me,
while it is day; the night cometh when
no man can work.*

IF every individual would adopt these words of our blessed Lord, as a principle to govern his daily conduct, and strive to follow the example he has set us; even here, we should experience such substantial happiness, as only could be exceeded by that we should have joyful reason to expect hereafter.

It is very natural to suppose I should be led to the choice of such a subject as this, upon my appearing before you again in my official capacity: the reflections that have been necessarily familiar to me of late, suggested the propriety of it: nor is it less so, to expect that one returned in a
manner

manner from the confines of the grave, should be able to convey some idea of the awful prospect such a situation presents beyond it. I will venture to affirm therefore, from the evidence of experience, that few in high health and spirits can form a just and profitable notion of the tremendous effects of an approaching dissolution; unless they have been long exercised in serious contemplations upon the end of their being, and a future state; and, even then, the various occupations, pleasures, and connections in life—nay, the mere power of a free circulation upon the animal spirits, will operate against the admittance of that silent, solemn meditation, so adapted to the awakening scene; unless, under the influence of Divine grace, we accustom ourselves to the exercise of this serious task: for the intrusion of worldly thoughts will naturally set the object at a distance, instead of encouraging a daily recollection of the certainty and importance of the event. No—to obtain an affecting and permanent apprehension of “that country from which no traveller returns,” the state of the body must in some measure assist, instead of impeding, these

these interesting enquiries. From the effects of pain, watchfulness, and abstinence, the impetuosity of the spirits is subdued; and the senses, no longer enslaved by the fascinating charms of worldly gratifications, are free to indulge an unmolested comparison between the value of time and eternity. The body is reduced to that happy subjection which the apostle proportionably advises even in health; to enable it to determine upon the insignificance of temporal enjoyments, which then appear in fading colours, in their true perishing nature; while the glories of an immortal state begin to dawn upon the soul (now less attracted by its native earth), from the hope and necessity of possessing something better suited to its eternal happiness. But doubts and fears, the attendants of human weakness, are still apt to intrude, to cloud the blissful prospect, and to disturb the cheering hope of this desirable rest.—Now, the last chance of our malicious, contending foe, urges him to oppose our final triumph by all his wiles; nor does he withhold the utmost exertion of his limited power to distract, if not destroy, when under the last trial of our wa-
vering

vering faith. At this sharp season of corroding retrospection, the trespasses of years present themselves in formidable array; and no less surprise the memory by their number, than terrify the conscience with their magnitude. And then our blessed Master's declaration, that "for every idle word we shall be judged," brings on a weight of terrible amazement: omissions of duty—misapplication of our time—abuse of the blessings of fortune—neglected benefits of many reprieves, and the valuable returns of health to body and mind—conspire to perplex us. Poor and imperfect as are all our best efforts of contrition and repentance at the season of selfish fear and bodily infirmity ("mere sacrifices of the lame and "blind"), so is all language insufficient to paint the anguish and terrors of such an awakening period. Nor is the perturbation of our thoughts less liable to be excited from the situation of our relative concerns.

While body and soul remain united in their present state of existence, the mind will unavoidably (and I may add, worthily) be attracted by those objects which have promoted its best and least objectionable happiness

happiness here below. And even amidst the contemplation of our eternal interests, we yet become a prey to conflicts most powerfully affecting to our human frame, which, from the before-mentioned consideration, becomes still more susceptible of moving scenes—the agitation caused from due attention to family affairs, which perhaps surprise of sickness has found neglected—the pangs of nature upon parting from our dearest friends—the racking anxiety for their future welfare—and, if the case is heightened by the agonizing circumstance of leaving tender children fatherless and unprotected, *the shock exceeds description!*—The sore distress to behold the difficult suppression of labouring grief in those around us; that test of sterling affection! the result of tenderness, and conflicting struggle of nature and the passions—the sad conviction that their fondest possible hopes are vain—to sum up all, the dread expectancy of the *final* moment, and the alarming uncertainty of what *may* follow—raise sensations of most sorrowful complexion, not readily imagined by persons immersed
in

in luxury and worldly cares, or engrossed by vanity and trifles.

It is by no means with a view of artificially moving the passions, that I have preferred this mode of introduction to my discourse; but only to prepare your minds for a serious reception of this interesting admonition, that the "night cometh when no man can work."

In discoursing to you upon these words, I shall first consider the text as it furnishes us with the most perfect example of the work we have to do.

Secondly, I shall insist upon the wisdom and necessity of following it, from the certain and fearful consequence of the neglect. And,

Lastly, I shall take occasion, from the spirit of the whole verse together, to shew you that a constant and vigorous discharge of duty, in our several callings, is positively required on our parts; in opposition to the sentiments of many well-meaning, but highly mistaken persons, who fancy that faith should absorb all our powers; and that it is perfectly efficacious, independent of works.

works. Whereas, if we rest secure in an inactive belief, we shall be found to militate against the whole tenor of the gospel; for if our faith produceth no good work, no essential efforts of charity and benevolence, however strong our rational conviction of the truth of the gospel, it is no better than the faith of devils; and ought, as it does them, to “make us tremble.”

Whoever will duly consider the nature of that Being who made him, the surprising faculties of his own mind, and the value of his soul, will readily perceive that he could not be formed either for a state of indolence or sensual indulgence; and, least of all, for trifling amusements.

An all-perfect Being could not possibly have produced any thing originally imperfect in its kind. God pronounces upon all his created works, “that they were good.” Goodness itself must have intended his creatures for happiness; and if to his other attributes we add the *wisdom* of the Creator, we must necessarily conclude that man was never formed only to “eat, and drink, and sleep, and rise up to play.” If this alone is the end of our being, as it seems to be

the wish of too many by their actions ; if God could be satisfied with creatures of such a description ; if he thought proper to have no higher order in the scale of earthly creation—he might have ceased from his work at the formation of the brutal world, whose exercise of the sensual appetites constitutes their only good ; and the world would have exhibited one scene of savage and bestial nature. But we must conclude, from the faculties and powers of man, it was the gracious design of the Creator to produce a being of far superior excellence ; that should be capable of displaying his glory ; of crowning, by his endowments and conduct, the works of his hands below ; and, finally, of attaining to that perfection of a still higher order of beings, which translation was to be the reward of his obedience, piety, and diligence. Accordingly, God distinguishes man, at his first formation, with the singular honour of bearing his own image—that is, comparatively, with respect to his immortal part, the powers of his mind, his innocence, and whatever perfections it pleased God to impart to him. God gave him also a will to choose, which

which constitutes the distinguishing and valuable gift of liberty; and he laid but one single restraint upon him, which also was for his *good*, to preserve him guiltless, and to conduct him to heaven.

But the insinuating power of the tempter, who envied both his present and promised happiness, contrived to effect the abuse of his free-will; and through his disobedience he justly forfeited his possession and his hope; and thence introduced into the world the many evils we so severely feel. Still, even under this wretched change, which inevitably incurred the immediate marks of God's justice, the light of his mercy shone with redoubled splendour: for, in the instant of the fall, he promised that future needful aid, which, in the hidden counsels of his wisdom and mercy, had been decreed should render vain the serpent's wish and power; that should defeat the utmost malice of our inveterate foe; and render us finally triumphant, if not our own fault. This assistance we are sure to have, if we ask it humbly; nor will it be taken from us, if we use the means to retain it. Our

Saviour himself declares, the “gates of hell shall not prevail against his love.”

In the promise “that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head,” we perceive the *first* prophecy of our Saviour’s tender love, and of the benefits obtained for us by the sacrifice of himself—“offered,” as the apostle says, “from the beginning of the world.”

It is the Eternal Word, this powerful Mediator, this Divine Master, that from the period of their luckless trespass has enabled his creatures, by the free gift of his grace, *to work out their salvation*: for “without me,” says he, “ye can do nothing,”—nothing truly religious, nothing perfectly acceptable to the Father.

It must be obvious to the weakest understanding, that if man in a state of primitive innocence was liable to fall, and actually did so (for otherwise he must have been subject to compulsion, which destroys the very idea of free-will), he cannot raise himself *again* by his own power. If he thereby weakened the abilities he had before, and forfeited the conditional and necessary support

support of his Maker and Protector, he must consequently afford some satisfaction to restore himself to the notice of an offended Creator; and be furnished with new strength, to enable him to do any thing acceptable to him for the future. Where now of himself could he procure this power? How, when sunk in trespasses, could he offer sufficient satisfaction for the ungrateful offence?—Both these are purchased for us by the inestimable love of God, in the redemption of Jesus Christ, who offered full satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and contained in his own divine nature a source of every needful power for the act of regeneration: through him we have the means proffered to train us to glory, and every requisite assistance promised us. But recollect that our will is still left free; and we must strive to render it subservient to the will of God, or we shall find ourselves utterly incapable of partaking of his grace, and the Divine nature.

As to the pattern of our work, afforded us in the life of our blessed Master, it is of the last concern to us to consider the dignity of the person who is our example. To

crown his merciful goodness towards his creatures, God at last *sent his Son into the world*, "that we might live through him." In the fulness of time, when it seemed best to unerring wisdom, that glorious Person took upon him our frail nature; that all we who are born under the light of the gospel, might have the happy assurance of eternal life. He came under that veil, that he might better inculcate the work that is expected from us; to convince us that, without Divine help, it cannot be perfected; and, from his utter contempt of all earthly pomp, to teach us that an *improper* love of the world is incompatible with the *pure love of God*; and that we must "set our affections on things above, and not on things upon the earth."

It is true, we can never arrive at that degree of self denial and purity that was so conspicuously manifest in the blessed Jesus, because he was very God as well as man; reconciling in our flesh the world unto himself, and able to resist the most subtle machinations of the Evil One. But he exacts no more from us than what is possible to an infirm nature at best; and in proportion
to

to our talents, and the grace we may acquire. "To whom much is given, of him much will be required." "And he who knoweth his master's will, and doth it not, must expect to be beaten with many stripes." But there are abundant instances in which we shall be expected to follow his example, or we shall be judged at the last day for the abuse of so great a benefit. It is said of him, that "he went about doing good;" shewing continual acts of benevolence, charity, and mercy. How many of us are blessed with the completest means of exerting *all* these virtues, and do no *good at all*; who (independent of the accidental advantages that may flow to others, and which are unavoidable in the supply of their various luxuries) "live wholly to themselves; whose god is their belly; whose glory is in their shame;" who, instead of doing good continually, spread hourly mischief from the contagion of their example, in the badness of their lives!—If, after all we can do, the best of men must allow themselves unprofitable servants, from the manifest imperfection of their choicest works, and their constant need

of aid and pardon; what can we think of those who live “without God in the world,” who desert his service, depreciate his servants, abuse his mercies, and are more or less engaged in a continual round of wickedness and folly?

Among the many illustrious characteristics that adorned our Saviour’s life, there is none he oftener displayed (because none more essential to correct the presumption of our present nature) than HUMILITY. He assures us that we must “be converted, and become as little children, before we can enter the kingdom of God;” and that whosoever “humbleth himself as a little child, is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” This doubtless is the vital spirit of Christian virtue. He took every occasion to shew us the necessity of it. “If your Lord and Master,” says he, “does this unto you, how much more should ye minister one unto another!” *i. e.* how far should ye be from being puffed up with vanity—from valuing yourselves upon superior gifts, or situation—when ye receive all from the same wise Author who appointeth or permitteth the condition of rich and

and poor, and is “no respecter of persons.” He but lends you these talents and advantages, to try you, in your respective characters, whether you are sensible of his providence, prefer his glory, and your own chief good, to the accumulation of unprofitable wealth, the pride of worldly grandeur, and the vain corroding emulation of equalling those above you. But what numbers shall we find, who, instead of cultivating this refining virtue, lord it over their fellow-creatures with most oppressive sway ! or, if their power will not gratify tyrannical indulgence, they hold out scornful distance to the modest and unfortunate ; treat the needy with unfeeling and contemptuous insolence ; and often, if they cannot hurt, neglect them. To such we may apply the just reproach of the Psalmist, “ Why boastest thou thyself, that thou canst do mischief ? whereas the goodness of God endureth yet daily.”

Next to humility, the example of our blessed Master is as eminent for charity ; the very bond of peace, without which all our religion is vain. Can there exist a more memorable or exalted proof of it than

in his dying words? Though convulsed with the torment of their cruelty who crucified him, and suffering in his soul still severer agonies, from a sense of what was due to sin; when, for a moment only, he laments the dreadful apprehension of God's forsaking him, even in that moment of horror he still exclaims, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" How few among us attend to this bright example of universal love. We too often put the foulest construction upon the slightest and most uncertain reports; and can load one another with unmerited disgrace, not barely to save ourselves from the consequence of casual slander, but that our own deformities may be less attended to, and our threadbare virtues gain by the comparison. If we did but call to mind our Saviour's tenderness in judging, who knew the very heart; if we accepted his advice to remove the beam first out of our own eye—we should be better qualified to relieve our brethren from the mote that may obstruct *their* sight; we should be inclined to pity and conceal their infirmities.

But, secondly, there is a positive necessity

sity that we should acquire some practical habit of these virtues, before we quit this scene; because we are told that, “ unless
 “ our righteousness exceeds that of the
 “ Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no
 “ wise enter into the kingdom of heaven;”
 that is, if we have not something more than the *form* of godliness, which was the most of *their* religion, we shall never be prepared for the vision and enjoyment of the Deity; who can behold nothing impure or imperfect in its kind, and whose favour constitutes the essence of all happiness here and hereafter. Unless we obtain the power of godliness here below, we cannot expect to be capable of exercising it in a still purer degree where there is no other employment. We should therefore keep constantly in mind, that we are now only upon trial for a more perfect state of being; for which we are here to be schooled and prepared, in the manner our Maker graciously sees most likely to draw us to him, if we do not wilfully resist the means proposed.

Still, after all his tender regard towards us, it is possible we may fall short of his
 most

most glorious promises, if we neglect the opportunities he affords us of obtaining them; and, instead of hearkening to his voice, incline to the seducements of the world, the flesh, and the devil. We should keep in mind that we “cannot serve two masters, but that his we are whom we obey;” that, as we fall, so we shall rise again; either from a course of obedience to life immortal, or of sin unto death: it therefore concerns us much to choose in time whom we will serve. And, lastly, if we are so far sunk in degeneracy and blindness, as not to be moved to reform our ways by the sense of God’s gracious love, or by gratitude for his numberless mercies; let the certain and fearful consequence of neglecting to become better, rouse us from our sinful lethargy and danger together; let a principle of self-love, if no better can be found at present, begin the work, and stimulate our labours. God, in the depth of his wisdom and goodness, hath appointed various methods to bring us back to our duty. He hath declared that he delighteth not in the death of a sinner; but that, if we will confess and forsake our sins, he will forgive—
 nay

may more, reward us. To those who are not to be reclaimed by gentle means—by the hope even of “happiness that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive,” he holds forth (from the same fatherly desire of our salvation) the direful vengeance of an offended God; the unavoidable punishment due to sin, which required the sacrifice and atonement of the immaculate Lamb, to procure to us the *possibility* of a recovery; and, finally, to such as are almost incurable, he represents the terrors of hell itself—“the worm that dieth not, the fire that is not quenched:” descriptions which could not have proceeded from the God of truth, if they did not signify the severest punishments that can be fancied; if they were not the properest signs to convey to our present senses the hazard we run in trifling with the care of our souls; if it was not the just and inevitable portion of such as delight not in holiness, but in the ways of ungodliness.

If there is a God, and that there is all nature plainly shews throughout her works; if there is a heaven, which as necessarily follows

follows there must be, and that it is a state of complete felicity; then the society of that place cannot but be composed of beings whose sentiments correspond with the will of their Superior, and suit the nature of their situation; and who are capable of receiving his commands as their ultimate happiness. To suppose that the wicked can dwell among the holy, is a contradiction that must strike the weakest capacity. It is not so *entirely*, even in this corrupted and imperfect state of things. That there is a mixture of good and bad with us, is perfectly consistent with a state of probation: and why the upright cannot always avoid communication with the worthless, proceeds from causes equally natural. We cannot discern the workings of the heart; and the craft and policy of designing wicked men may serve to conceal their villanous purposes, and long deceive the unsuspicious, honest mind; for now “we see but through
 “ a glass darkly, but hereafter it shall be
 “ face to face.” No hypocrisy, no art, no deception, can be admitted there where nought but holiness reigns. But even *here*, I may assert, you will never find the profligate
 gate

gate or profane over anxious for the society and intercourse of the chaste, the sober, or the pious man; nor will you see characters notoriously bad, of any description, courting the connexion of religious persons; much less will the latter wilfully herd with those who have not God in all their thoughts, but who *study* to be sinful—who *persist* in folly. Why should we absurdly dare to think less worthily of the purity of heaven, of the dwelling of the Almighty, than of our own depraved community? No; depend upon it, my friends, “there is a place for “the righteous, and for the wicked:” they can never dwell together. “The wages of “sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The one is not to be more avoided (if we regard our best interests) than the other to be desired; and, happy for us, it is still within our reach while *time remaineth*.

Let us then, my friends, avail ourselves of that precious talent; let us improve every moment. Let us strive to redeem the past, by repenting of our numberless transgressions, and leaning upon the Rock of our Salvation, both for the atonement and recovery.

recovery. Let us kiss the rod that gently correcteth us in mercy, reminding us of our failings and our danger ; let us bless the staff that supporteth us from sinking, and will conduct us assuredly to glory, if we throw it not away. And, finally, let us always “ be ready to distribute, willing to “ communicate, ever abounding in the “ work of the Lord ;” from this solemn and important consideration, “ that the “ night cometh when no man can work.”
Now, &c.

28 SE60

S E R.

S E R M O N V.

Commiseration and Lenity recommended in
the Case of Penitents.

Prohibenda autem maximè est ira in puniendo: CIC. OFF.

Aimer Dieu, aimer ses semblables : quoi de plus simple
et de plus naturel ! — Vouloir du bien à qui nous fait du mal :
quoi de plus grand, et de plus sublime ! — J'espère en la clé-
mence d'un juge qui peut faire grâce à l'erreur.

MARMONT. BELISAIRE.



Countess of Devon and
the Duke of Devon

Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A.
Amherst College, Amherst, Mass., U.S.A.
et de la part de la bibliothèque de la même Université
pour la collection de la bibliothèque de la même Université
et de la part de la bibliothèque de la même Université
et de la part de la bibliothèque de la même Université

S E R M O N V.

JOHN, ch. v. latter part of ver. 14.

Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

THESE are the words of mercy, pronounced by the mouth of wisdom. I shall only infer from them, at this time,

First, The necessity of encouraging a spirit of mildness and Christian charity towards one another, as brethren of the same fallen stock, and engaged in one common warfare.

Secondly, The serious and profitable caution they contain to all transgressors of God's laws, and especially such as have offended in any singular and heinous manner. And,

Thirdly, I shall make a brief application of what has been said, by way of assisting those who are happily returned from the error of their ways.

First, then, a spirit of tenderness and charity is a principle most clearly recommended by our blessed Lord, in the eighth chapter of this same gospel. Although the person there brought before Christ for condemnation, was not only accused of a crime that incurred the severest penalty of a positive law, as being a most flagitious breach of God's commandment, and that legal testimony was besides at hand to vindicate the justice of her punishment; yet we see he both prevented and reprobated the merciless desire of her enemies, by a reply that so reproached their own consciences, as effectually to check the prosecution they were so eager to support—"And he said unto them, He " that is without sin among you, let him " cast the first stone."

We must carefully observe, however, that there is nothing done or said by our blessed Master to excuse or encourage the offender; but his divine wisdom was here exerted to rescue him from the treacherous device of the evil-minded Jews, who (with their usual ingratitude and malignity) endeavoured to ensnare him into a breach of their religious laws, that they might accuse him
of

of usurping judicial power: and, besides this, we may fairly surmise, that “as he
 “was commissioned with power on earth to
 “forgive sins,” he embraced this gracious opportunity of shewing both his mercy and authority. We may reasonably infer, that *he* “who did all things well,” being acquainted with the remorse and contrition that had probably taken place in this woman’s heart, judged her a subject of compassion; and accepted the dawn of repentance, which the ignorant and unmerciful decision of her fellow-sinners would have disregarded, though pleaded with the utmost eloquence.

It is very natural to suppose there were particulars in her case which are not communicated in the story, and which attracted our Lord’s generosity and favour: thus far at least we may safely conclude—that the charge being brought from the basest motive, as above described, such accusers would not be over-scrupulous as to the circumstances of their intelligence, nor likely to act from any sound principle of virtue; as indeed their universal desertion of a charge

so *apparently* well supported, most abundantly proves.

It is worthy notice, upon a subject of this nature, that the persons who made the complaint against this sinful woman were of the *Scribes and Pharisees*, i. e. the expounders of the law, and a remarkable sect of Jews of those days, “who upon opinion of their own “godliness despised others,” and were consequently prone to *severity*. Our Saviour’s character of these people is very pointed, and proper to be here inserted—“Woe unto “you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” (Luke, xi. 44). Of the former he says, ver. 52, “Woe unto you lawyers, for ye “have taken away the key of knowledge; “ye entered not in yourselves, and them “that were entering ye hindered:”—by your close adherence to the mere letter of the law, without at all consulting the spirit of it, ye do “transgress the commandments of “God by your traditions.” And of the latter he thus speaks in the 39th verse: “Ye make clean the outside of the platter: “but your inside is full of ravening and “wickedness;” and, in another place, “Ye
“pass

“ pass over the weighty matters of the law,
 “ judgment, mercy, and the love of God.”
 Now this is the exact description of hypocrites of all times—the worst of all characters—and against which the meek and merciful Jesus himself is ever loud and vehement in his reproaches; and it is the only instance we have wherein his rebukes are tinged with gall, instead of compassion. Another of the leading characters of these men, was their zeal for making *profelytes*; for which, our Lord observes, “ they would compass sea and land.” But what kind of disciples were they? Such as would condescend to embrace their corrupted prejudices, and favourite tenets; who were ready to abide by their traditions, to subscribe minutely to their particular and ostentatious ceremonies. They had no regard to the *hidden man of the heart*, to the *cleansing the inside of the vessel*, but only to the polishing its exterior appearance. They could marvel and appear shocked that the immaculate Jesus should “ sit down to meat with unwashen hands;” but were wholly regardless of the divine purity of his soul, which discovered itself in all that he said or did.

They were quick to observe the least infringement of their *formal rites*, and furious (as in this instance of the adulterous person) to have the vengeance of the law inflicted; but were no ways concerned for the *conviction, conversion, or future fate* of the wretched sinner.

In *this* their zeal should have most eminently appeared—in making profelytes to the law of holiness; in considering what it means to have mercy and not sacrifice; in cultivating true lowliness of heart; “in seeking first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,” which would have qualified them to pass judgment with mercy: but then it is evident they must have begun with themselves; they must have degraded the boasted efficacy of the ceremonial law; they must have lowered their own outward consequence, their seeming zeal, their self-righteousness: this the pride and deceit of human nature could not submit to. They aimed at no such spiritual exaltation as that of the humble publican, which ever proceeds from the consciousness of our own unworthiness; from the becoming principle of true humility. They coveted,
on

on the contrary, that praise which flows from the influence of authority ; from being possessed of “ the uppermost seats in the “ synagogues, and the greetings in the “ markets.” Had they studied the interest of their immortal part, and the service and glory of their Maker, in their earnestness to increase their disciples, they would have set loose from all these worldly charms, at least they would not have considered them as the chief object of their wishes ; they would have probed the secret workings of their own hearts, and traced the springs and ends of all their vaunted assiduity, and plausible exertion. In short, had they “ set their “ affections on things above,” instead of building happiness upon vain and perishing objects, they would have laboured for the fruit of true wisdom, the real *knowledge of themselves and the Lord* ; they would have been led to own the universal deformity of a selfish nature, that “ all are concluded “ under sin,” and that the mercy and grace of God are needful to all men for the salvation of their souls. This is the faith that should actuate the hypocrites of our times ;
that

that must be possessed in order to bring about their reformation.

If men would use the means of obtaining the power of godliness, as diligently as they often find it expedient to uphold the form of it, the spirit of christian charity would be more conspicuous in the professors of the gospel; they would then strive to imitate that heavenly temper of compassion and forbearance exemplified in the life and doctrine of the Divine Author of their religion.—From an impartial judgment on their own conduct; from an humble consciousness of their own manifold errors and offences; from a due sense of the necessity of the Divine aid, and a serious regard for the fate of their own souls; they would be necessarily induced to think candidly and feelingly of the case of their brethren. However flagrant a transgression might appear in the deceitful view of pharisaical and hypocritical comparison, they would courageously and honestly lay aside the mask that conceals their own imperfection and deformity; they would tremble at the consciousness of “*undivulged crimes* ;” renounce
that

that darling self-complacency which magnifies the mote in a brother's eye, while it lessens the beam that obstructs the observation of its own defects; and charitably account for the force or peculiarity of the seduction that has triumphed over the weakness of their fellow-creature, which perhaps they would have failed in resisting, even with greater advantages for the conflict, and under less powerful temptations.

This spirit, in short, would cause them to confess, "If God should be extreme
" to mark what is amiss, who may abide
" it?" and, instead of loudly arraigning a casual offender—instead of the proud and impudent boast, that they are not as other men—they would rather fall 'before the throne of grace; and adopting the accepted language of the poor in spirit, exclaim, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

But if such a change is positively needful in those whose formal pretensions, and political caution, can so far cheat the eyes of men, as to render them rather objects of admiration than censure—what shall we say of such who, with a load of public enormities about them, have yet so little modesty,

or

or fellow-feeling, as to bear hard upon the faults of *others*, and deny the mercy they so much need themselves. It makes one shudder to believe such men exist!

Gracious Lord! when we attend to the deceitfulness of the human heart, that it is “desperately wicked, and who can know “it?” when we reflect how deficient are the *best* of men—that often, with all the advantages of education, nay, of religious instruction, early instilled and forcibly impressed, many yet plunge into the mire of pollution, and continue long slaves to vice; are industrious in courting premeditated wickedness; swift to shed blood; exulting in the power of doing evil; oppressors of the humble and deserving; slack in helping the innocent and needy, however great their ability of doing good, however unfortunate the objects of their just regard; living wholly to themselves, and in a manner “without God in the world;” holding the truth in unrighteousness, and hardening their hearts by the sweets of prosperity, instead of enlarging them from the dictates of gratitude; slow to repentance; impatient of rebuke; deaf to continual exhortation—
when

when we contemplate such a melancholy picture, can we wonder that the *ignorant* go astray? that persons wanting these advantages, men of like passions, partaking of the common weakness, and with so many less restraints, shall *occasionally* fall victims to the stratagems of the subtle and vigilant foe, the violence of temptation, and the artifices of the wicked, who labour in their master's service with greater diligence and success than do the labourers in the vineyard of the Lord?

If then candour, compassion, advice, and forbearance are due from one man to another, in instances of general failing; if it is a positive Christian duty to soften, and not aggravate, the infirmity of our brethren; if we are to forgive those personally offending us "not seven times, but until seventy times seven,"—how much more incumbent is it upon us to check all severity of censure in cases that do not immediately affect us! If "being slow to judge" marks the proper character of every member of the Christian flock, how much more sensibly does it behove the ministers of Christ's household (at the same time that we discharge

charge our trust, "by rebuking in season
 "and out of season") to be gentle and
 merciful, willing to hear, and ready to re-
 ceive the strayed sheep into the fold. How
 highly does it concern us to copy the exam-
 ple set us by the Chief Shepherd, the Re-
 deemer of our souls, to "be every thing,"
 in a religious sense, "to every one, that we
 "may gain some!" how grateful does the
 promise sound in the ears of the patient and
 commiserating master, "that he who turns
 "a sinner from the error of his way shall
 "cover a multitude of sins, and save a soul
 "alive!" how are we encouraged to bear
 and forbear, when we are told "that there
 "is joy in heaven over one sinner that re-
 "penteth!" and how shall we dare to look
 the Lord of Life and Glory in the face, at
 the hour of death, or in the day of judg-
 ment—how call upon the Lamb (who laid
 down his life for the sins of the whole
 world) to remit the punishment done to
 our own abundant provocations—if we che-
 rish unforgiveness, or are rigid in pursuing
 an offending brother!

Was our final sentence to be determined
 only by the conscious innocence of being

qualified to cast the lot of condemnation upon every one we arrogantly suppose more guilty than ourselves, how few but would sink away, lest they should be involved in the certain consequence of the common guilt!—who would venture “to cast the first stone?”

If then we are commanded “not to judge, that we may not be judged—to forgive, that we may be forgiven;” if these are the conditions of expected lenity held out to us by the Supreme Judge of heaven and earth—surely it behoves us to be very delicate in passing sentence: even interest, that predominant principle in a degenerated selfish nature, should unite with duty, to guard us against severity.

But, in the capacity of the pastoral office, a still nicer care is requisite, to watch the contrition of the returning sinner, lest we miss that blessed moment when the Lord is pleased to *touch the heart*. When the Divine spark occasionally stirs within us, through the stings of goading conscience, *then* is our happy task to fan the flame of rekindling obedience: not to quench the operation of the Spirit, by spreading the dark veil

veil of unrelenting justice, and thus help the terrors of the Evil One to inflict despair ; but to unfold the stores and riches of God's grace ; to implore the healing beams of mercy ; to direct the penitent to the fountain of redemption, the certain refuge for sorrowing, terror-stricken sinners ; to “ preach peace to the humble and broken-hearted, whom God will not despise.”

It is said of our blessed Master, by the prophet who foretold his gracious errand upon earth, “ that he should not break “ the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax ;” a description he often verified, and which is highly manifested in the instance that furnishes the subject of this discourse, where his wisdom shone so conspicuously in the manner of delivering the convicted offender, when imminent condemnation seemed to threaten her with ruin. Where any hope of reformation remained, we ever find our gracious Master ready to pour in the balm of consolation ; and using the gentlest reproofs, and most wholesome exhortations, wherever sincerity appeared to mark true penitence. In this light may “ the Sun of Righteousness most truly be
“ said

“ said to rise with healing in his wings.” This heaven-born Messenger of Peace to the disconsolate, never mixed terror and severity in his advice, but to such as no other method could reclaim—the hypocrites, and those whose perverseness and love of vice would not permit them to feel their sad condition, till made to smart: by these, as likewise by the self-willed, and the self-righteous, the latter part of his character will be finally felt, when “ he sends forth “ judgment unto victory.”

It is our peculiar duty therefore to imitate the merciful pattern; to miss no opportunity of reclaiming all who are in danger of being led captive by the wiles of the grand enemy; by using every method to convince and comfort the dejected sinner; by proposing every encouragement the gospel can supply, in order to enforce a quick return to duty, and careful regard to future conduct.

Besides, there is a variety of circumstances, even in the *trespasses* of men, which demand proportionable treatment, and call upon our pity more than our reproach:—the weakness of nature may yield to the

force of a temptation; the artful stratagems of the wicked may take us off our guard, and for a while intoxicate and beguile the unwary, by the violence of sensual appetites, and the heat of youth; the inexperience of iniquity's woful stings, the natural levity attending that thoughtless season of life, may combine to overpower us; and if the crime should happen to be amongst the *first* offences of the kind committed, it should moderate the severity of our judgment, and excite all charitable allowance for the particulars that may have occasioned it. Yet some, alas! are so dead to all the sentiments of generous feeling, that far from indulging the impulse that sympathy might be supposed to raise for those of like infirmities with themselves, they grudge that mercy to another which their own foul deeds, with much less reason, would exact. Ignorant of what manner of spirit they are of, they would, in a fit of merciless and hasty vengeance, "command fire to consume their brethren," were it in their power; instead of exercising that patient lenity shewn by the Saviour and Judge of all men, who in the just rebuke he gave his disciples

ples for yielding to a violent and unforgiving temper, declares "he is not come to destroy, but to save mankind."

However, whatever degree of excuse the above supposed particulars may furnish, the case is very different with the old and hardened sinner, for whom no similar defence can possibly be advanced. Age generally does, or should, *alone* remove a number of constitutional temptations; and where neither years, nor repeated counsel, nor self-conviction, nor love nor fear of God, have influence to check the brutal lusts and habits men unnaturally harbour even at this late time of day, we must pronounce this to be the *vice of the mind alone*, the most dangerous in its effects, the most difficult to conquer; though even against such we shut not the door of grace and mercy: God forbid! While there is life, and health, and reason, there is some hope still left, that the soul may at length be touched with a saving sense of its hazardous state: but, in the nature of things, *their* case is awfully *alarming*; they who are hastily approaching the end of their trial, whose fate is in a manner at the door, cannot be too earnest in their late conflict

with the enemy ; such cannot too soon, or vigorously, attempt the task of reformation : difficult and painful as the labour is, it must be entered upon, and make some progress also ; the fruits of repentance must appear, however late, or we can upon no scripture grounds build hopes of pardon. There is this further difference also between the old and young : the former have a longer and heavier account to settle ; they stand upon the brink of a precipice, whence there is no retreat, but by immediate and uncommon resolution : the latter are hastening, it is true, to the same dangerous gulph ; but they still possess the advantages of time and strength to prevent their fate—happy if they profit by them !

Well then, in either case, when the soul is smitten with the sense of its folly and misconduct, and sighs (with the prodigal) to be restored to the favour of its heavenly Father, shall we cruelly leave the convicted mourner to the hazard of further mischief ? Shall we cut off the prospect of a father's consoling welcome, the last support under the misery of a wounded spirit ? Shall we deny the only refuge to the wretched—repentance,

pentance, and the hope of pardon? Rather let us be forward to clear the way of every difficulty; holding forth the great and precious promises to all who repent and turn unto the Lord; who, in these cheering words of Christ himself, declareth, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

The christian temper I am recommending to your practice, is beautifully exemplified in a passage of St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon, and very applicable to the intention of this discourse. The holy apostle, in the true spirit of Christian love, pleads with his friend for the restoration of a servant to his favour, who had materially injured him; and in a manner too that of all others might have afforded a plea, even from the most christian character, for discontinuing all further intercourse; because it was in the case of *dishonesty*, and the lenity required might have exposed him to fresh inconvenience and distress; but even in *this* case, when certain of the offender's conviction and amendment, nay, of his rising from this fall to an eminent degree of purity and religious proficiency, this excellent

judge of what was profitable to them both, in the progress of their common calling, entreats with earnestness that he might be *received again*. He enjoins it “as a thing
 “that was convenient;” that is, which might help forward their mutual salvation; or, in his own words, “that the communi-
 “cation of his faith might become effectual
 “to the acknowledging every good thing
 “that was in him, through Christ Jesus.” And the further argument he employs, besides his own authority and opinion, is, that “perhaps he departed for a season,
 “that thou thereby shouldest receive him
 “for ever;” which is as much as to say, that his mind might be so awakened by the sense of his former transgressions, and the mercy shewn him by God in accepting his repentance, and punishing him so slightly in proportion to his deserts, as to work a signal reformation in his future life; and that by diligent caution, and help of proper means, he might be enabled to reach a high degree of christian virtue; in which case the apostle might well assert, “then truly
 “not as a servant, but above a servant, as a
 “brother beloved in the Lord.”

Having now endeavoured to establish the cause of mercy, I proceed,

Secondly, To guard this doctrine from any bad effect upon the careless part of my hearers, by setting before you the serious and profitable caution they contain; lest, from what has been advanced, any one should falsely and wickedly surmise, that men may safely sin, that grace may abound; against which every pious Christian will readily exclaim, "God forbid!"

As a relapse is often of sorer consequence in disorders of the body than the first attack, so is it with the mind on the commission of sin; the cause operates equally in both respects. All diseases leave the patient in a degree of weakness more susceptible of taking injury from neglect, and require proportionable caution to avoid a return of the complaint.

As, therefore, in bodily infirmities, we are peculiarly attentive to recover such a degree of strength as may defend us from the danger to which our state is exposed; so, after any failure in moral conduct, we cannot be too guarded against a repetition of

the trespass, and a deceitful persuasion that we are still within reach of cure.

To avoid this, we must ever keep in mind the wholesome remedy which our Lord prescribes to us in the text, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee;" for every return to vice will make equal havoc with our religious principle, as the quick succession of disease hastens to destroy the human frame; the powers of resistance are gradually impaired, till at length disorders destroy the body, and sin the soul.

With those whom the smart of vicious folly hath opened their eyes, to see the baseness and peril of transgressing God's holy laws, the admonition in the text is calculated to supply the benefit of continual vigilance, lest they should be surprised by him who has always emissaries at work to ensnare the unwary, and persuade such as through mercy have once escaped, that therefore the risk is not so great—"they shall not die." This treacherous argument our inveterate enemy successfully employed against our first parent. Because he saw the serpent live after he had tasted the

the forbidden fruit, she rashly disregarded the first command received; she adverted not to the nature of him who cannot lie; and, building on her own power alone, inevitably fell. Not satisfied with innocence, but curious to know both good and evil, she perceived not that she might die to happiness here and hereafter, though the animal life did not immediately perish by the transgression. In short, the will was turned from God, and his support; and his hapless creatures soon experienced, by their shame and conscious misery, “that the wages of sin is death,” in its worst description.

So thoughtless men are still inclined to hasten their ruin; they frequently proceed from sin to sin, and boldly “treasure up” to themselves wrath against the day of “wrath, and dreadful retribution.” Thus Pharaoh hardened his proud ungrateful heart through the very means that should have checked his madness, “not knowing” that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance.” It is a woful symptom of our depraved condition, that God’s forbearance and long-suffering are so often thus abused, and men become daring, in proportion

tion as they receive mercy; but it is too true, and sadly instanced in the ungracious lives and stubborn courses of all wicked men.

That the relapsing into sin is truly dangerous, may be gathered from the assurance of Jesus Christ himself; and the sentence is repeated by St. Peter, who presents the wavering sinner with this awakening reprimand, "If, after they have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they were again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning;" which amounts exactly to our Lord's own words, "the last state of that man is worse than the first:"—"for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness (proceeds the apostle), than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Which last assertion includes a very serious truth indeed; it signifies that the gross 'ingratitude of a relapsing Christian, in sinning against such plain and happy methods of salvation, must needs render *him*

' more

‘ more incurable, and justly condemnable,
 ‘ than any Heathen who was not brought
 ‘ to such conviction.’ In this sense there-
 fore, and on supposition of a man’s wilfully
 abusing the way of righteousness, that is, the
 christian scheme of salvation, it is so far
 true that he had better not have known it;
 because the Heathen will be only judged
 according to the light afforded him: “ but
 “ he to whom much is given, of him will
 “ much be required; for whoso knoweth
 “ his master’s will, and doth it not, shall
 “ be beaten with many stripes.” So, on
 the comparison of an apostate Christian with
 an unenlightened Heathen, the case of the
 latter is both less sinful and dangerous;—
 yet, let it be most joyfully received by
 them “ that believe, and obey the truth,
 “ that the gospel is the power of God unto
 “ salvation;” and to them that are called,
i. e. (in a sober christian sense) to whom the
 word of the Lord is revealed, “ Christ is
 “ both the power of God and the wisdom
 “ of God.”

I shall now conclude with a few short
 remarks by way of application, which may
 be of use to such who, sensible of their past
 offences,

offences, are anxious to redeem the time, and who see the need of God's assistance to secure them from future danger.

First, then, conviction is one main step to reformation: "the whole need not a physician, but those that are sick; I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Where men *feel* themselves faulty, and begin to wish to *mend*, there *then* is hope. In order to remove the maladies to which this earthly tenement is liable, they naturally have recourse to the best advice they can procure. Now sin, as before observed, is the sickness of the soul; and happy is it for us we have not *far* to seek, nor *many* to consult, to obtain a remedy: the disorder is universal, and has but one Physician that can relieve it. To all who wisely and steadily apply his remedy, his skill will prove *infallible*: it is a free cure, "without money or without price;" it is an invitation without exception, full of mercy, and of great comfort; it is against a distemper that leadeth unto death and misery eternal. "Come unto me," says he, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." "There is
"now

“ now no condemnation,” says the apostle, “ to such as are in Christ Jesus.” But mark how he guards this valuable truth (lest any should *misunderstand* his doctrine), by adding—to “ them who walk not after “ the flesh, but after the spirit.” After what spirit? The spirit of Christ, *i. e.* the spirit of holiness. To be really in Christ Jesus, means to have the life of Christ wrought in you, whereby ye shew forth the fruits of this union; “ without me (says he) ye can “ do nothing.” But if it doth not appear that ye *do any* thing, why then it is evident ye are *none* of Christ’s; “ for the “ law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus “ doth make you free from the law of sin “ and death, so that ye will no more sin, “ but will mortify your members which “ are on earth.” They therefore who have heartily repented, will shew it by *amendment of life*.

Secondly, Holiness is progressive, like other attainments; perfection cannot be expected before conversion: wherefore, the sense of guilt and unworthiness being once established, the next step for a reasonable creature to take, is to apply the *means* held
out

out in order to effect a purer state of heart ; just as we should employ a proper regimen to renew the soundness of a decayed constitution.

As, in the latter case, good sense directs us to avoid whatever formerly has impaired our health ; so, in the soul's cure, particular diligence must be given to shun all objects that have a tendency to choke the good seed that is taking root. The instruments that will assist our spiritual labours, are prayer ; *reading the word* of God ; meditating on his divine perfections, on the *certainty of death*, on the *unalterable fate* of our souls hereafter ; constant attendance on the public worship ; dwelling daily upon the many mercies we receive ; and, above all, imploring the influence of God's Holy Spirit, to preserve us clean and upright. This must be asked through the efficacious atonement made by Christ's sufferings and death, who is both a sacrifice for sin, and a principle of life in all them that believe. “ Nay, he is the light which “ lighteth every man that cometh into the “ world ;” without the interest of whose merits there could be no forgiveness, no holiness,

holiness, no salvation. To partake these gracious gifts, no means will prove so sure as frequently receiving the holy sacrament; that being an institution our Lord *expressly* formed to remind his followers of these manifold and astonishing mercies. To this memorial of God's love to man, we have nothing to bring, to render us *safe* partakers, but humble and contrite hearts, and faith in what is done for us. None can come too soon after a proper sense of having fallen: to keep away, is positively acknowledging that our repentance is deficient, that we *wish* not a recovery; for who will ever pretend they desire a return of health, while they refuse the easiest, the only methods to obtain it? Negligence in applying this sure and blessed means, is a proof we build upon our own strength alone; it is leaning on a broken reed, and is equally blameable and ruinous.

All delays yield opportunities to the enemy. If not to advance in virtue is to decline, surely not to keep our ground must be productive of quicker and greater mischief. Nothing can avail us in our christian

tian

tian warfare, but vigilance and perseverance; self-distrust and self-abasement. "When
 "I am weak then am I strong," says St. Paul; that is, when "I am conscious that
 "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing," then "I am led to apply to him who is
 "able to save to the utmost." Thus will ye be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked, and after all to stand your ground.

Lastly, Whoever among you has fully experienced the hapless, helpless condition of a frail and carnal nature; who do truly pant after the right way, and to come off victorious in the end—you must, above all things, beware of making light of past transgressions. "None but fools make a
 "mock of sin;"—"it is a dreadful thing
 "to fall into the hands of the living God;" for "there is no more sacrifice for sin," after you have provoked the long-suffering of God to withdraw his grace, and leave you to yourselves. Let your light therefore in future so shine before your still blind companions, that they may behold your good works, and by your example be led to glorify the Author of all goodness; lest, after
 having

having once escaped the wiles of Satan,
“ you be led captive again at his will,” and
so a “ worfe thing come unto thee.”

May God give his grace and blessing to
what has been now said, that we may all
avoid in time the terrors of eternity.

Now to God the Father, &c.

28 SE60

S E R M O N VI.

A CLUB SERMON.

Pecuniam ad eam rem dare, contribuere, solvere jubeant.

CIC.

Hæc res et jungit, junctos et servat amicos.

HOR.



S E R M O N VI.

*Be ye kindly affectioned one to another with
brotherly love.*

THESE words, which you will find at the beginning of the tenth verse of the twelfth chapter of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans, are, I think, applicable to the nature of the society which you are here assembled to celebrate this day: at least, from what I can gather of the design of it, they are as proper as any I could have chosen for the purpose. If your society is founded in a pure sense of the words of the text, and that your intentions and actions agree with your present outward appearance of good order, most undoubtedly a pleasing satisfaction will arise in your hearts on this occasion; you will deserve the praise of all present, and indeed of all who, hearing of

so benevolent an institution, must naturally rejoice at the good consequences flowing from it.

It cannot be expected that I should offer any thing very new upon such a subject; however, I have thrown together a few obvious thoughts upon it, which, if neither so pertinent or correct as I could wish, the shortness of the time I have had to prepare a discourse must be my apology, having so very lately understood that it was a charge incumbent upon me.

I shall begin with observing, what is too often the case of the generality who attend these kind of sermons, that the love of novelty is their leading motive, hoping to hear something out of the common way, and not attending to the only good end of all pulpit oratory, which ought to be to amend, by affecting the heart more than by pleasing the ear, or amusing the fancy. They give their presence here as a thing of course, without which respect they think their annual ceremony would not appear perfect; and the *sermon*, with such as these, is thought a part of the day's duty, no more to be dispensed with than the *ribband*, the
4
wand,

wand, the *music*, or the *feast*. Whereas it ought not so lightly to be considered ; it is not a *part* only, but a principal part ; since hereby the institution acquires additional credit, is made of real consequence, the intention of it is properly explained and enforced, and the merit of private beneficence set forth to *public view*, and recommended as an *example to others*. Wherefore, before I proceed to enlarge upon the sense of the text, having given you my honest sentiments thus far, as to the necessity of a serious attention to this portion of the day's business, it may not be altogether foreign to the purpose to make a few observations upon the progress of society in general, with a more immediate view to the design of your institution, as it is founded in wisdom and universal benevolence.

Man is truly said to be a social creature, his very formation declares it, and the various powers and dispositions of his mind confirm it. Had he been designed for a life of solitude, reason, and speech especially, would have been but of little use to him ; all the kindred affections would have been bestowed upon him in vain : for, wrapt up in himself,

the objects about him would not appear worthy of his notice or assistance. Had man been placed in such a state of inactivity, he must have been reckoned at least the lowest of the intellectual creation, if not quite unworthy the production of so wise and excellent a Creator. His inactive soul might have been said to sleep; and, in truth, a being of so solitary a cast, bent only on his own preservation and enjoyment, might more properly have been said, like the brute creation, to possess no soul at all.

In process of time, when by degrees the numbers of mankind increased; and by the various ingenuity of individuals the arts and sciences began to dawn, and from experience and encouragement to advance towards perfection—ambition, with its offspring, war; pleasure, with indolence and luxury, *her* companions, crept in likewise; at first so gently, as scarce to be distinguished from laudable emulation and needful recreation, and thus unnoticed escaped the bounds of due restriction. At length, conquest in many parts inflaming and upholding these pernicious ingredients in the composition of human nature, laws and authority became
 necessary

necessary to moderate the growing calamity, and check disorders which shortly would have reduced every thing to a state of discord and confusion; and rendered man's condition as deplorable and unhappy, as it would have proved useless and dissatisfactory, in a selfish inactivity. In short, this evil would have reduced us to a level with the beasts of the forest, the devourers of each other.

At this period, and far beyond it, we shall find the world in as flourishing a state with regard to trade, arts, and society, as probably it will be: for though daily improvements are making in various articles of life, which wear the face of novelty with us, yet it is most likely, had we lived ages back (and indeed we may form some judgment from what we read of them), we should have seen many arts in high progress and fame, which in modern times put on the air of novelty; and we should have found that many were lost, which were at least equal in ingenuity and use to any with which we are now acquainted. This illustrates the observation of Solomon in one sense,

sense, “ that there is nothing new under the “ sun ;” and proves also, in some degree, that human invention, like the earth itself, may be truly said to be wearing away.

Certain however it is, if any former age surpassed the present in point of riches, luxury, or expence, no country ever equalled ours in respect of splendour, ease, and the various blandishments of life ; a degree of superiority which, under proper regulation, would be a *blessing* ; and the poor, who are necessarily employed in contributing to the comforts of the rich, and who from the number of their children have difficulty to earn a comfortable subsistence, or from infirmities of years are reduced to want and misery, might hope to reap constant benefit from the superfluous prosperity “ of those “ who abound.” But, as it is too generally seen, through the pernicious example of the wealthy and powerful, the indolent and voluptuous, all classes of men seem to be degenerating both in manners and morals : the wealthy have too many of them neither hearts to feel, or hands to give ; the needy, from necessity of condition, and the
universal

universal influence of vice, are become abandoned beyond precedent, and to a pitch of horror.

Now the unequal measure of the good things of this life, which by the thoughtless and profane are too often offered as objections to the providence and wisdom of God, may, if rightly considered, prove the means of teaching us true knowledge, and of setting us right in great measure as to the extraordinary inequalities which seem to reign in the present division of things: for they are by no means the most happy who have the most wealth; nor are they to be deemed the most wretched of mankind, who are placed in a state of inferiority to, and dependence upon, the former. God hath kindly bestowed upon the generality of men capacities and feelings according to the state he hath pleased to place them in. Many who are rich are eternally at war with their consciences, concerning the legality of the methods they have pursued to acquire this superiority. These wounding reflections do not torment the poor; but, on the other hand, they are often miserable on the comparison of their outward circumstances, without

without attending to the inward miseries accompanying those they envy: and they will not reflect that, though poor, true happiness is ever in their own reach; that the method of obtaining it requires neither interest, wealth, or fine parts; that they may always possess enough of it to relish this life sufficiently in their natural and humble station, by contentment and industry, and resignation to his will who knoweth what is best for them. And, further, that if they would but consider how awkward honours would sit upon them (by the example they may apply of many upstart characters of their own acquaintance), and how troublesome and ill bestowed great possessions would be without talents, education, manners, or connections to employ and adorn them properly, they would relinquish all vain thoughts which disturb their present peace, and serve but to render them envious, restless in themselves, and ungrateful to him who provides for his creatures with the utmost wisdom and fatherly kindness.

These are observations, the truth of which, I am inclined to think, every one will admit, who considers them with any degree

degree of attention, and without partiality to his own ambitious views or licentious inclinations. I have likewise recited facts which unhappily contribute to the uneasiness of the larger part of mankind; and, knowing them to be such, I can but wish they did not exist, next to which is the endeavour to prevent them; but they were also necessary to be mentioned, as no improper close of the brief and humble sketch I have here attempted of the rise and progress of society.

But, further, though it should be allowed that this hasty picture I have drawn is a tolerable representation of the state of mankind in general, yet many exceptions doubtless may be produced to it. Numerous (God be praised) are the instances of great and opulent persons, who bestow a large portion of their good things in this life to the comfort and relief of their fellow-creatures. Many have acquired vast riches by great and glorious exploits, by dint of late and early industry, by some manly and virtuous achievement; and who employ them, as I before observed, to his glory who gave them, and with the additional satisfaction
of

of a good conscience acquitting and applauding them.

Again—we may also find, upon enquiry, many honest hearts and industrious dispositions among the merely laborious class of men ; who, contented with their lot, do not envy those above them, nor repine at their own situation ; who earn their daily subsistence not without long and painful labour, much less can they supply the urgent necessities of a numerous family without arduous difficulty and care. Still, low as these are in life, as to temporal prosperity, they are highly worthy of imitation ; they are in reality great characters, genuine philosophers, and the more deserving of praise and encouragement, as being victorious over temptations and distresses of all kinds, often through the unfeeling treatment of those in more elevated stations, who should protect instead of oppressing them. Nature, and a kind heart, shine through all the clouds of poverty and obscurity ; you will find such persons ever attentive to the welfare and happiness of their children, most assiduous in their different employments, provident of their gains, frugal in their expences (if
any

any they can allow themselves after performing the duty of men and fathers), courteous to their superiors, strictly honest in their dealings, and exerting every means within the narrow compass of their capacities and power, to spread happiness around them, and to make life pass tolerable and easy; yet these are but men, and subject to the frailties incident to us all. Labour calls for relaxation, cares for amusement; they have a natural turn for sociableness with the rest of their species; but they employ their hours of convivial pastime to the best of purposes: at the same time that they relieve their minds from the anxiety naturally produced by toil and forecast, they do not forget the partners of their destined trial, or the innocent and engaging pledges of domestic tenderness, whose future benefit is the aim of their endeavours. Their mirth they render sweeter by mingling it with prudence and humanity; and this enjoyment is heightened by the pleasing reflection, “that they are kindly affectioned one to another;” that “brotherly love” is the grand motive of all their meetings, an incitement to their contributions.—It was doubtless

doubtless by such worthy, though humble characters, that the kind of society you are now here assembled to celebrate was first invented. Men of this social and benign nature, taking all occasions and pretences of forming themselves into those little assemblies, which are commonly termed *clubs*, establishing themselves into a kind of fraternity for the innocent amusement of a few leisure hours ; at the same time, by a general contribution of a trifling sum, not then felt, promoting a fund for the support of individuals, or their families, who should suffer through accident, sickness, or death. A rational, humane, and bountiful institution ! thus blending the useful with the agreeable ; worthy of imitation, of praise, and naturally conducive to the best of purposes !

If I am rightly informed, this is the character of the society you belong to, and that it is an annual custom to celebrate it in this manner ; and I hope I am not mistaken : for to implore the assistance of Providence, unless in a good cause ; or to frequent God's house, and solemnly approach his presence, but upon a laudable account, would be the
highest

highest presumption and impiety. Now if this description of your society, and the men belonging to it, be a true copy of your design, you have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope; for the darling commandment of our blessed Saviour himself to us was, "that we should love one another:" and the love of our brethren is a branch of the eternal law of nature, as well as the principal aim of religion; and you cannot shew it better than by providing for their necessities, and contributing to their comfort. To be kindly affectioned is the very purity of a Christian: it is a disposition that must occasion a perpetual fountain of peace and joy in his own mind, and endear him to all mankind by the strongest ties of gratitude and friendship. If we were but more attentive to this precept of the apostle, we should all pass our time, whilst upon the hazardous or vexatious journey through life, with tranquillity and inward consolation, at least; and should not fail of securing to ourselves a place of rest, where no cares can intrude to molest us, or adversity break in upon our peace.

How charming the reflection, that when

VOL. I.

L

our

our day of trial is past, we shall experience, among the many joys of a state of never-ceasing happiness, the congratulations and applauses of those exalted and exulting objects, whose troubles we softened when below, and whose wounds we healed by the balsam of our benevolence ! Persist then, my brethren, in brotherly love ; and be assured that, of all human virtues, it is the most likely to procure you a safe and pure conscience. Whilst in the body, it will certainly afford you the warmest satisfaction in practice ; and prove, through the efficacious merits of your blessed Saviour, one of the first qualifications for your admittance into the kingdom of heaven : of which great truth we have his own repeated confirmations.

Deficient as I am sensible I have been in my humble endeavours for your essential service this day, which have nothing but good-will to recommend them, yet I have unwarily extended my discourse beyond its usual limits ; I will not therefore trespass much longer upon your time at present : and yet I cannot dismiss you without a caution and exhortation becoming me, in the
character

character of your friend, but more particularly as your minister.

I might perhaps have made the observation in another part of the discourse with more propriety ; but the precept and good intention are not in the least diminished in value by that omission. “ Let all things “ be done decently and in order,” saith St. Paul : a wise and wholesome advice ; and very necessary for your observation on this occasion, both for example, and for the sake of your own conscience—indeed for the honour and credit of your society. Without regard to this rule nothing can be carried on with decency, or answer any good purpose. It is inconsistent with the very nature of the institution to act otherwise. To give way to riot and confusion, would be the heaviest disgrace to you ; it would give occasion to the world to ridicule, nay to censure, your society ; and to set you down as the most thoughtless creatures, who could appear in the greatest order and regularity in the house of your Creator, to offer up your best thanks for his former benefits, and to implore his future providence and favour upon your undertakings ; and who in

the space of a few hours could be seen guilty of such rash forgetfulness, by the most careless debauchery, and scandalous disorder, profaning that sacred name which you so lately addressed upon your knees, and making so unkind, so ungrateful a return for all his benefits and blessings. Such a conduct as this, I am well assured, you will all wish to avoid; nor hardly, I hope, can there be found one (in a society whose plan hath every rational, moral, and religious argument to recommend it) that does not now in his own mind hold so insensible a behaviour in its deserved contempt; nor, in truth, could any one acting in so unbecoming a manner have the assurance or folly to suppose that his contributions would be accepted, or prosper. Men who have earnestly a good design in view, cannot, dare not act so unworthily and inconsistently.

How galling, how ridiculous would be the report! and what shame must fall on him who was the occasion that any one of your members should so soon deserve the notice of the magistrates, in consequence of his dissolute behaviour!

I have too good an opinion of all I know
among

among you, to suspect so ill of you; and I wish so sincerely all success to your undertakings, that I hope you will not deceive me in my favourable conjectures: nay, the admonition, I can believe, is almost needless; but as from experience I have frequently known the reputation of a whole body suffer through the delinquency of one, my regard for your interest and good name has made me thus free in my exhortations and caution; and naturally induces me to add a short remark or two on the most dangerous and depraving of all vices to which men are subject—drunkenness, the too frequent companion, but ultimate foe to laudable conviviality. It is a vice rarely subdued when once become habitual, because no faults are so incurable as those men are apt to delight in. And yet it is most surprising, that the noblest of God's creatures here below should affect so detestable a habit; for a drunken man becomes the most insufferable and contemptible wretch that can be found on earth. No character appears more despicable and deformed in the eyes of the temperate (not to say thinking) man, than the drunkard: and this reminds me of a

story I have read of some great person of antiquity, who obscured all his other virtues (for many of which he was renowned), even the glory of valour itself, by the *single vice of drinking to excess*. So that, in a defeat he finally met with from the enemy, having hanged himself on a tree through vexation of being routed, when his army saw him in this melancholy situation, although he had behaved himself most gallantly in the action, the common jest of all was this—that what they saw thus hanging in the air was not *a man*, but *a bottle*: a remark which, although most certainly it has something *ludicrous* in it, yet cannot fail to have its due effect in application: and the obvious conclusion is, that if *heathens* could see and reprobate the disgrace of such a habit, how much more powerfully should it influence Christians to *abstain from it*!

An excess in this passion has the most fatal effects upon the mind, the body, and the fortunes of men; it turns the good-natured man into an idiot, and the choleric into a murderer. Excess of liquor dispossesses a man of his best powers, and infuses
 qualities

qualities into the mind which it was a stranger to before: whence comes one of the strongest sayings of a Roman historian, “He who jests upon a man that is drunk, injures the absent.” Besides the bad effects of this vice over the mind, when it is actually under its dominion, it insensibly weakens the understanding, impairs the memory, and renders in time those other faults habitual, which are the consequence of intoxication.

If we reflect that the many kind and beneficial actions a man has done in his life, the many great exploits he has achieved by resolution and address, and every good quality he might have excelled in, are all obscured by the recollection that he was a *fool*, and consequently a slave to his greatest enemy, to the basest of his enjoyments—this reflection alone must surely sufficiently alarm us, and guard against giving any encouragement to hard drinking.

After all, I would not have you infer, from any thing I have said, that I think good cheer and decent mirth either improper or unbecoming upon this occasion; on the contrary, I hold it a part of your anniversary, as laudable as necessary: nothing

can be more unexceptionable, than that you should enjoy yourselves at such a meeting. "The liberal soul," says Solomon, "rejoiceth in its own deeds;" nor can our joy be too great, when it flows from a truly good purpose. But prudent moderation will at the same time contribute to your happiness: and it was a saying of one of the most social men living, that excess was the ruin of all merriment; and he whose glory consists in the displaying the powers of his *head*, was in general the dullest and most unpleasant fellow in company.

Mirth, good humour, and benevolence, are near akin; and very proper companions, or rather constituents, of festivity; but remember, they always disappear at the approach of excess and riot. Depend upon it, the latter are thorough hypocrites: for some time they may deceive, under the appearance of the *former* guests; but ultimately anger, revenge, and strife, come forth, and nothing remains of that decorum so requisite to the preservation of true joy. I am also well aware that it is no easy thing with many to keep the balance between a reasonable jollity, and unbounded excess; the hearts
of

of some men are in this respect better than their heads: the best resolution is insensibly exchanged for folly, when attacked at once by a vivacity of temper, and an open generous heart; by the general example of those whom we love, enlisted in one common cause; and by flattering importunity prevailing over an easy disposition. But the fleetest courser may be stopt through care and steadiness; and if you find but little power in artificial methods to protect you under temptation, and to support your laudable resolution, avail yourselves of a more powerful, of an *infallible principle—religious restraint*. Let the fear of *sinning* check the desire of too much *indulgence*. Keep in mind the end of your appearing here this day, and the advice of the apostle, “What-
“ ever ye eat, or whatever ye drink, do all
“ to the glory of God;” and I am well persuaded you will act like men and like Christians, and reflect honour on your fraternity.

Finally, my brethren, “be kindly affectioned one to another:” and so you will prove yourselves to be, if you preserve peace and harmony amongst you: and if you
cherish

cherish the remaining part of the text, the
“ continuance in brotherly love,” there will
be no fear of your giving way to anger and
excess.

I shall now conclude, and dismiss you in
the words of the same apostle, in the thir-
teenth verse of the next chapter :

“ Let us walk honestly, as in the day ;
“ not in rioting and drunkenness, not in
“ chambering and wantonness ; but put you
“ on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not
“ provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts
“ thereof.”

Now, &c.

28 SE60

S E R.

S E R M O N VII.

A grateful sense of God's mercies, the test of a sincere reliance on him, and productive of caution in our general behaviour.

Quem vero astrorum ordines, quem dierum noctiumque vicissitudines, quem mensium temperatio, quemque ea quæ gignuntur nobis ad fruendum, non *gratum* esse cogant—hunc hominem omnino numerare qui decet ?

CIC. DE LEGIB.

Quid prius dicam solitis Parentis
Laudibus ; qui res hominum ac deorum,
Qui mare et terras variisque mundum
Temperat horis ?
Unde nil majus generatur ipso,
Nec viget quidquam finile aut secundum.

HOR.



S E R M O N V I I .

P S A L M 1 . 23 .

*Whoſo offereth me thanks and praiſe, he
honoureth me; and to him that ordereth
his converſation aright will I ſhew the
ſalvation of God.*

TH E R E is nothing can ſtrike us as more becoming, than that God's mercies ſhould move us to pleaſe him. We have a declaration here, as from himſelf, of the value he ſets upon our grateful acknowledgments of his bounty. He rates it ſo very high, you ſee, as to ſtyle it "doing him honour"—a moſt engaging inducement, ſingly, to pay him the juſt tribute of "thanks and praiſe," and to excite a due ſenſe of his favours in thoſe who may have been hitherto blind to the ways of his providence; or ſo ignorant of the wiſe and juſt government of the Supreme Being, as to place their good ſucceſs in
life

life *wholly* to their own foresight and industry ; or their misfortunes to the opposition of their enemies, or neglect of their friends alone. This is not considering things in a religious point of view : it is excluding the grace of resignation ; and losing sight of the chief object of our regard, the accomplishment of our eternal interests, which may be effected perhaps, in God's gracious mercy, by the very means which are most irksome for us to submit to at present ; at the same time that the unjust neglect of others towards us, is *no less excusable on this account*, but helps to fill up the measure of *their* delinquencies, in abusing the means and objects afforded them to exercise their virtue. In short, we are too apt to centre all our good in the prosperity and happiness of this life, not considering that suffering and submission compose a valuable preparation for a better.

The words of the text include two duties, absolutely incumbent upon us to discharge with the utmost exactness ; viz. *gratitude* and an *upright conversation*.

I shall do my endeavour to convince you, therefore, of the intrinsic value of the

former, and the detestable character of its opposite vice: I shall also explain the sense in which the *latter* should be received, the necessity of it, and the greatness of the reward annexed to it.

As to the first, perhaps I may more forcibly inculcate the obligation upon us of rendering a grateful return to our Maker for all his mercies, by representing the baseness of a contrary deportment; though it is almost needless to dwell long upon the sin of ingratitude, it being so very hateful wherever it appears.

That it is the offspring of pride and presumption, we may learn from the first foul instance of it, and the fatal effects it produced in the apostacy and fall of Satan, who is still the instigator of it in every mind that hath yielded to its dominion. It is the true characteristic of a devilish nature, which is ever set upon the malicious and revengeful desire of dishonouring the Almighty; for to entice creatures who derive their very existence, and every prospect of happiness, from God, to flight his goodness, and rebel against his power, is a work
that

that can only proceed from the Father of all wickedness.

To convey a faint idea of this abominable sin, let us suppose, for instance, the case of a fellow-creature : some unprotected orphan will suit our purpose ; whom, from a principle of charity, we have trained from the earliest infancy, and afforded every part of useful education, to guard the object from the temptations and dangers of an evil world : moreover, that we have furnished the means of a comfortable subsistence in the passage through it. Now if, contrary to our best precaution, these friendly endeavours should be frustrated ; if the moral conduct and worldly success of the party should be affected by a vicious and untoward disposition—if, from sympathizing concern for the weakness of human nature, we should yet be led to enforce advice and exhortation, and renew our best assistance for the recovery and future welfare of the deluded, thoughtless creature ; and if, after all, our kind and repeated remonstrances should be despised, and instead of reformation we should discover that we had been even *wronged* by the very person we had thus fostered,

fostered, and strove to save—in short, to crown the depravity of the human heart, if we should find that even our own character had been *treacherously abused*, and our generous designs most grossly *misinterpreted*—what title could we affix to such unmerited usage, but the blackest *ingratitude*? How readily would every one exclaim against the unworthiness of such a wretch, and decline all further notice of the offender, but what his complicated trespasses demanded! The application is too obvious; it is our own case, in our respective conduct towards our heavenly Benefactor. “Thou art the man,” must speak conviction to every conscience; and though the comparison is miserably deficient in the description of our delinquency towards God, considering his tender mercies (for in proportion as his power and goodness exceed our weakness and imperfect virtue, so far doth what he hath done for us surpass our utmost benevolence towards each other), it may yet serve as an humble effort, plainly to demonstrate the weight of our demerit, and bring home to us an awakening sting of self reproach.

VOL. I.

M

That

That we stand indebted to him for our being, ought alone to exact a life of obedience; because, from that act of his divine good will, we enjoy the glorious opportunity of fitting ourselves for Heaven, of becoming the sons of God, and of living in unspeakable happiness for ever. But that the argument in favour of gratitude to our Maker may want no plea to recommend it, let us take into consideration the various circumstances of our temporal concerns; and direct the force of it to that sensibility, which self-love renders so predominant in a depraved and dependent state.

Let any of us but draw a short and fair sketch of that part of his journey through life, which is distinguished by the more interesting events; and, if he has just notions of the God who made him, he will freely acknowledge the manifold mercies he has received: and, if any regard is paid to the provocation of our continual perverseness and misconduct, the bounty and becoming gratitude will be proportionably enhanced.

To pass over his fatherly protection during the helpless and careless years of infancy

fancy and childhood ("for through him
 "have we been holden up since we were
 "born"), and the safety we owe to his
 preventing care, when the attention of
 earthly parents and friends hath been neces-
 sarily interrupted, or withdrawn; we must
 own that the advantages of birth, educa-
 tion, agreeable situation, fortune, health,
 and every comfort we enjoy, all proceed
 from his inexhaustible beneficence; that, if
 we misemploy and abuse those valuable
 gifts of Heaven, it by no means diminishes
 the praise and thanks due to the author of
 them, but affords accumulated proofs of our
 depravity and ingratitude.

Nor have they, who are more humbly
 circumstanced—no, not the very poorest
 of all—less cause to bless and adore God's
 holy name, and to confess that they are con-
 tinually defended under the shadow of his
 wings: for though, in the depths of his
 unerring wisdom, he has pleased to permit
 an inequality among mankind, for the
 perfecting of designs beyond the reach of
 our narrow enquiry; yet to all he hath
 dispensed blessings suitable to their situa-
 tion, of which all equally partake, as health,

and strength, and senses, and reason: all may obtain a sufficient degree of happiness proportionate to the rank and condition allotted them, and none have just reason to complain. If, through the imperfection of this state, some are successful, and others unhappy, we shall find it often flowing from their *own demerit* of some kind or other: and where misfortune wears a surer mark of *visitation* from *above*, even in correction a consolatory hope ariseth; it is the chastisement of the best of fathers, for our essential good; we must thankfully submit, in humble recollection that “whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth, and correcteth every son whom he receiveth.”

But from how many difficulties must all classes of mortals remember to have been delivered at one time or other! From what imminent dangers have many of us been preserved, when our own strength and ingenuity have failed, and God's gracious interposition befriended us beyond our hope, in the happy turn of some event which we neither foresaw, or could imagine! From how many unknown perils have we been rescued by the same almighty power,

power, who never ceaseth guarding and providing for his creatures ! And this doubtless will compose a part of our future joy and grateful praise, when the wonders of his providence, and the glories of his kingdom, shall be revealed.

Who is it that hath so often “ made all
 “ our bed in our sickness, when the terrors
 “ of death have set themselves in array
 “ about us ?” Have we not all had many occasions of saying with the royal Psalmist,
 “ If the Lord had not helped me, it had
 “ not failed but my soul had been put to
 “ silence. But when I said my foot hath
 “ slipped, thy mercy, O Lord, hath helped
 “ me up. In the multitude of the sor-
 “ rows that I had in my heart, thy com-
 “ forts have refreshed me.”

Should not the daily and manifold proofs of such great blessings engage us further to join the Psalmist in this pious wish—“ O
 “ that men would therefore praise the
 “ Lord for his goodness, and declare the
 “ wonders he doth for the children of men!
 “ Does it not behove us to offer unto him
 “ the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and to tell
 “ out his works with gladness ? Since,
 M 3 when

“ when we cry unto the Lord in our trouble, he delivereth us out of our distress.”

Since, then, to fathom the riches of God's mercies, in the case of his unworthy servants, is out of the power of our confined knowledge ; and that, even with the purest inclination, we could never enumerate the hourly benefits we receive ; there is still a positive obligation upon us to exalt his holy name, according to our best abilities, however we may fall short of perfection in the attempt.

Now there is one exertion of his love towards us, which, as it far transcends every other gift both in its excellence and duration, demands a still larger share of thanks and praise ; viz. the redemption of our souls, and the promise of endless felicity. Though the captivating charms of wealth and power, and the humiliating sense of want and dependence, may raise (upon the comparison) a murmur of discontent in many ; though the blessings of uninterrupted health and prosperity, which some enjoy, may occasionally provoke the impatience of those who grieve, languish, and pine

pine under pain, through sickness or misfortunes; and though even the state of those who labour under the consciousness of sin, *that forest calamity of all*, doth almost exceed description—still it is mighty consolation, under the very worst of sufferings, that the free gift of God's grace is equally held out to all orders of mankind; “that the rich and the poor shall meet together,” because “the Lord is the maker of them all;” that the time shall come “when all tears shall be wiped from their eyes;” that “the poor have the gospel preached unto them, which has brought life and immortality to light:” and, to the unparalleled comfort of the last sad description of sufferers, our Saviour invites “all that are weary and heavy laden (with their sins) to come unto him, and he will give them rest.”

Surely for this invaluable token of God's love, and the gracious means of securing our hope of glory, we can never abundantly praise him here; time is insufficient for the task, it must be the employment of eternity. But if we are called upon to “offer him thanks and praise” for the ordinary

distributions of his benevolence, and in this humble tribute we are said to “ honour “ him;” how must our unworthiness be aggravated in a remissness to record so vast a blessing ! what rashness and folly do we testify in trifling with such precious opportunities ! Surely the enormity of the ingratitude rises in proportion to the magnitude of the blessing.

I have dwelt with some earnestness upon this great deficiency in our conduct, because it is impossible to express too strongly the remorse we ought to take to ourselves, when we reflect upon the universal and shameful neglect in this particular. It is a truth that cannot be disputed, that even from this sacred place, peculiarly appropriated to the resounding God’s praise, this most celebrated act of it is strangely disregarded by many. The sacrifice of the death of Christ, the benefits intended us thereby, the absolute necessity of his intercession to procure us the assistance of the holy spirit, are doctrines too seldom insisted upon in these days ; they give way to cold unprofitable essays upon the *beauty of moral virtue*, the unedifying arguments upon the *fitness of things*,

things, or at best the boasted value of mere *pharisaical pretensions*. We absurdly labour after the possession of an ideal perfection, without ever using the only effectual *means* of obtaining any *real virtue*. The regenerating influence of the Redeemer upon the soul, is rallied as a doctrine bordering upon wildness. *If the outside appears clean*, no matter how foul we are within. With continual experience of our own weakness, corruption, and incapacity to improve, we are still for doing all ourselves, though we scarce move one step in the task; and will not apply to him who alone can give us life, and qualify our unprofitable works.

Excepting in our excellent liturgy, which abounds in every collect, in every line almost, with the unparalleled love of our Saviour, and the expediency of our sole reliance on his mediation and aid; I might with safety deplore how seldom the name of Jesus Christ, and the genuine spirit of his doctrine, are enforced upon the multitude, and made the principle subject of pulpit oratory; how little is said of the merit of his atonement, and his being a principle of life to us. So that, as the Corinthians said to
Saint

Saint Paul “that they knew not whether
 “there was an Holy Ghost,” I much fear
 whether many of our uneducated brethren
 might not as truly say, that they too fel-
 dom hear of Jesus Christ, at least that they
 are wholly ignorant of their *true relation to*
him—that he is the Saviour of the world,
 who died to make them heirs of eternal life;
 to raise the very poorest of them, if not
 their own faults, from their present state of
 temporal insignificance, to the most glo-
 rious enjoyment in Heaven, where even
 kings and earthly potentates may hereafter
 envy their felicity, without the possibility
 of attaining to it. The too general defi-
 ciency of this essential subject in our dis-
 courses, gave rise to an observation, from
 a truly pious person, “that he always re-
 “joiced at the return of some particular
 “festivals, especially such as fell upon the
 “*Lord’s day*, because then he heard the
 “*name*, and *sufferings*, and *merits* of his
 “Saviour *duly celebrated*.”

Whereas, so depraved are the manners
 of the present times, that fashion is suffered
 to tyrannize even over the religion of the
 gospel, which must remain as unalterable

as

as God himself: for it is become unfashionable and irksome, instead of laudable and consolatory, to dwell upon the benefits of our redemption; and to insist upon the necessity of a saving grace through Christ, is as ignorantly as profanely construed by many into a violent tendency towards enthusiasm. Nay, to have the regular character of *preaching the gospel*, is even become a term of reproach against those who are separately appointed for no *other purpose*, and who boast of being the ministers of its *blessed author*, who came into the world to *publish these glad tidings of peace*, and to die for the establishment of the heavenly doctrine it contains.

But what are we to preach, if the means and terms of our salvation are to be rejected? We may well therefore affirm of this indispensable duty, what Saint Paul advances, “ Though we preach the gospel, we have
 “ nothing to glory of. For necessity is
 “ laid upon us, yea, woe is unto us if we
 “ preach not the gospel.” Whereas, so inconsistent and false is the judgment of some of its nominal disciples and teachers, that they bestow this valuable compliment
 of

of a *gospel* preacher upon every ignorant, low, and unqualified professor, who has assurance to intrude upon the sacred function, and boldly perplex (I had nearly said profane) the doctrines and language of the inspired writings; while the established and faithful minister of the mysteries of our holy religion is grossly dishonoured by so injurious a comparison; and which fulfils the prediction of our blessed Lord, that zeal for the honour of his name would prove the road for persecution here. But this let us account our triumph, since assuredly it will secure eternal glory in the life to come.

As ministers of Christ's word, then, we are bound to defend the absolute necessity of forcibly declaring to those under our charge, the *only terms of salvation* from sin and death; but at the same time we must ever keep in view that awful respect that is due to those serious doctrines. The apostle advises "all things to be done with decency and order:" and, without due attention to both these articles, the most solemn exhortations may fall short of their desired effect; nay, may even tend to the

dishonour of religion itself, as intimated in
 the above description of irregular teachers.
 In a stated and established congregation,
 there are authority and opportunity to rebuke
 any appearance of irreverence and improp-
 riety, and the means are at hand to pre-
 serve due decorum: but in fields, and trees,
 and public ways, the brutal licentiousness
 of an abandoned and thoughtless rabble is
 difficult to be restrained: and that sacred
 name, which the whole host of Heaven
 adores, and the saving doctrines it sanctifies,
 are exposed to the most scandalous profa-
 nation, and unworthily disgraced, by the
 injudicious exertions of weak and illiterate
 persons, nay sometimes disordered in their
 intellects. Thus are the spirit of the holy
 gospel, and the name of its blessed author,
 degraded by such misapplication of it; or
 almost discarded in the performance of that
 very worship, solely instituted to mag-
 nify and commemorate the glorious title
 of our Saviour. So that truly might
 the Holy Jesus express, in prophetic spirit,
 this sorrowful apprehension, " whether
 " at his coming he should find faith upon
 " the earth." Though part of what I
 have

have now said may appear something digressive to some, I would beg leave to observe, that what tends to a decent and becoming adoration of our Creator and Redeemer, necessarily implies a grateful diligence “to give thanks and praise” to the fountain of all good, for every article of his bounty.—I shall now conclude what I have to say upon the subject at this time, by a brief recapitulation and distinction of the terms contained in the text. It may not be unserviceable to our pious resolutions, in this respect, to distinguish properly between our thanks, as an act of more private devotion, and the additional tribute of public praise; equally incumbent upon us to perform, and expected from us by God.

As the grateful heart then is not satisfied with expressing the warmest sense of favours received from an earthly benefactor, but takes frequent occasion, by continual acknowledgments, and every possible return, to do justice to his patron’s benevolence, by extolling his generosity, and expatiating upon the value of his benefits; so we must not think we have acquitted ourselves sufficiently by our secret and humble sense of mercies

mercies received, or in private professions only of the strictest regard to our future conduct; but we must be loud in the praises of our heavenly benefactor; “ we must declare “ his name to our brethren, in the midst “ of the congregation must we praise him.” Since “ the very heavens praise his won- “ drous works, and his truth in the con- “ gregation of his saints,” thus must we ever manifest his honour, and power, and mercy. And to our public thanksgiving in his house, we must be mindful especially to unite that surest and most acceptable test of our gratitude, the *reformation of our ways*, by giving up ourselves to his service, not only with our lips, but in our lives. Then we shall shew, and feel, ourselves completely thankful for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings we enjoy; but, above all, for that inestimable benefit, the redemption of our souls through Jesus Christ our Lord. “ Our light will then “ so necessarily shine before men, that they “ will see our good works, and glorify our “ Father who is in Heaven.” We shall evince a substantial sense of the love of our Saviour, and the advantages of his gospel, when,

when, by using the gracious means he has procured us (and through faith in his name producing good works), we shall know that we live through him ; for every one that doth his will hath this promise, “ that “ they shall know of the doctrine whether “ it be of God.” We shall no longer be ashamed of being called in question for professing and teaching in the only name that can assure our salvation ; since it is only by a faithful perseverance in the duties of our calling that we can hope for any reward : for, when we discover so base an apostacy as to desert the form prescribed by Christ himself, we shall justly incur the severe denunciation of our offended Lord, “ Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of “ my words, in this adulterous and sinful “ generation, of him also shall the Son of “ Man be ashamed, when he cometh in “ the glory of his Father with his holy “ angels.” An adherence therefore to the only sound form of preaching, as far as relates to a minister’s public office, may be properly interpreted, so far, “ ordering his “ conver-

" conversation aright ;" which was the second branch of the text I promised to speak to.

But as time will not allow me at present to enter upon so important a subject, which requires a very full and clear discussion, I shall defer what I have further to add till we meet again.

...and
... ..

There is also a small yellowish greenish
brownish and a reddish brownish
brownish and a reddish brownish
brownish and a reddish brownish
brownish and a reddish brownish

28 SE60

S E R M O N VIII.

A grateful sense of God's mercies the test of a sincere reliance on him, and productive of caution in our general behaviour.

Haud scio an pietate adversus Deos sublatâ, fides etiam, et societas humani generis, et unâ excellentissima virtus justitia, tollatur.

CIC.

Neque enim ita generati a natura sumus, ut ad ludum jocumque facti videamur; sed ad severitatem potius, et ad quædam studia graviora atque majora.

ID.

THE R. M. D. N. VII.



It is the duty of the British Museum to preserve the
collections of the nation, and to make them accessible
to the public. The Museum is a place of learning
and research, and it is the duty of the British
Museum to preserve the collections of the nation,
and to make them accessible to the public.

S E R M O N VIII.

PSALM l. ver. 23.

Whoſo offereth me thanks and praiſe, he honoureth me; and to him who ordereth his converſation aright, will I ſhew the ſalvation of God.

IN my former diſcourſe upon the firſt diviſion of this text, I endeavoured to eſtabliſh a deep ſenſe of our continual obligation to ſhew the utmoſt gratitude towards God, both in public praiſe, no leſs than private thankſgiving, agreeable to the pious exultation of the Pſalmiſt—"Every day will
"I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, and
"praiſe thy name for ever and ever."—"As
"for me, I will be talking of thy worſhip,
"thy glory, thy praiſe, and wondrous
"works." In theſe words we diſcover a grateful effuſion of heart, from a perſonal ſenſe of the Divine favour; and in the fol-

lowing we may perceive the effect of a public acknowledgment thereof—"So that men shall speak of the might of thy marvelous acts, and I will also tell of thy greatness; the memorial of thy abundant kindness shall be shewed, that man shall sing of thy righteousness"—that is, I will not be content to pay thee the tribute of private devotion; but I will make thy mercies known, that men, from *my* experience, may be disposed to trust in thy care, and do honour to thy name.

I proceeded in the next place to describe to you the infamy and danger of a perverse insensibility to those daily benefits of which we all partake, particularly in what relates to the unparalleled blessing of our immortal prospects; and I enforced an unwearied attention to this bounden duty by suitable exhortations, from the necessity of a reformation in this article, and the fatal consequences of a contrary deportment in the denunciation of God through his Son, and indeed from the natural order and propriety of things themselves. I come now to consider the doctrine contained in the second branch of my text, viz. "To him who or-
dereth

“ dereth his conversation aright, will I
 “ shew the salvation of God”—and to explain, as proposed, the sense in which the words may be usefully received, the absolute necessity of attending to them, and the value of the reward annexed to the performance, by God himself—no less than eternal life.

And first for the meaning of the words : Whether we take them in a merely literal and more confined sense, or extend the spirit of them to the general tenor of our life, they will be found equally to concern us, as being indispensable in all our transactions here, and positively beneficial in training and fitting us for a pure and perfect state of enjoyment hereafter.

The signification of the phrase in the original is, “ who disposeth of his ways ;” that is, who forms his conduct by such rules and maxims as may assure him a peaceful conscience, and free him from the dread of any future evil consequence ; it includes the most cautious discharge of every duty of life ; and, if we are faithful in the exercise of what it implies, we may safely expect the favour and aid of him who deli-

vered the commandment. But it may be very well understood, in a more limited sense, to relate to our personal intercourse and conversation; and, according to the manner of speaking in our language, this appears the plainest meaning of the words; for whoever is so circumspect as to "order his conversation aright," according to a strict moral sense, will be found to have made as great a progress in a life of innocence and practical piety, as perhaps this state of imperfection will permit.

But in order to demonstrate the absolute expediency of observing this precept of the text, it may be more convincing to have recourse to *particulars*, and illustrate the doctrine by the comparison of what we *do*, with what we *ought* to do; to convince you what is "ordering your conversation aright," by representing some of the many cases wherein all ranks and orders of men *transgress* the precept: for which end I shall adopt the more *literal* meaning of the words at present, and proceed to the examination of our private intercourse in society; which, if tried by the text our Saviour gives us, will sufficiently inform us whether we come

up to the profitable idea of "ordering our
 " conversation aright ;" whether "our heart
 " be inclined to favour righteousness, and
 " perfect true holiness in the fear of our
 " Lord." For he says that "out of the
 " heart proceedeth evil thoughts, which
 " defile the man; and that of the abun-
 " dance of the heart the mouth speaketh ;"
 " that for every idle word that men speak
 " they shall give account at the day of judg-
 " ment;" and which indeed is a natural
 consequence, if the heart is concerned in
 the spirit of our conversation. But here
 it may not be amiss to digress a little, in
 order to rescue this sacred text from any
 injurious interpretation, and thereby to
 strengthen further the necessity of the cau-
 tion of "watching over the door of our
 " lips." In what is meant then by "every
 " idle word," I apprehend we are not to
 understand too rigidly every trifling, or per-
 haps vain expression, that may occasionally
 escape us; for though all unprofitable dis-
 course must indisputably yield to the more
 solid exercise of our faculties in the manage-
 ment of conversation, yet the former may
 have no wilful tendency to evil, and be in
 itself

itself perfectly innocent as to its *design* ; a relaxation only from graver or more important subjects ; and adapted to the attainments and comprehension of the various connections we shall inevitably fall into in the commerce of the world. But we are to fear most for such words or conversation as tend to injure our neighbour, or to corrupt the sentiments and manners of either party : these, though barely *words*, and perhaps never actually productive of any hurtful effect, yet partake largely of sinful influence, as flowing from the poisonous sources of present passion, vanity, malice, envy, or any other malignant quality of a depraved nature ; and therefore are justly liable to punishment, if wantonly indulged, instead of being restrained, according to this sentence—" by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

But, to return to my subject—if we look then into the world, and pass the most candid judgment upon the present state of conversation among the several ranks and classes of men, I fear we shall be forced to conclude that there is an universal deficiency respecting

“ing the guard we should keep over the “tongue,” implied and recommended in the text as an effectual means of obtaining the salvation of God.

To begin with some of the very lowest orders of society—if we were to examine the subjects of their ordinary discourse, the estimate I apprehend would fall far short of that simplicity and innocence we might with some reason expect from that quarter. Excepting in the humble cottage, and that too in most distant parts, and removed from the contaminating influence of larger communities, we shall find that a vicious spirit has prevailed to a degree that is truly alarming. Loose and lascivious discourse, with a familiar mixture of oaths and imprecations, form too considerable a part of the expressions of these people, whose constant employment in the fields and woods one might naturally hope would preserve them from any excess of profligacy. But still, among this sequestered class of mankind, I believe *less* of the foul corruption in this article is to be met with than in any other. Uninformed but in the science of their rustic occupations, and feeling the value of
time

time which contributes so essentially to their daily support, they have little leisure for that variety of thought which furnishes matter of conversation, or ability to employ it. Yet though I am now under the immediate business of exploring and confirming the too general depravity of the times, I cannot help observing that I believe as pure and grateful an offering of praise to the Supreme Being, and as sound a sense of his providence, is to be found in the mouths of *some* of this humble rank, as among most I shall have occasion to mention.

If we extend our enquiry concerning the same class as distributed in more *mixed* society, in villages and lesser towns, I fear we shall discover little advancement but in depravity. The filthy language with which the intercourse of the common people abounds in such societies, the dreadful cursing and blasphemous use of God's holy name, so scandalously prevalent among all denominations of the mechanic order—even the shocking imitation of lisping infants in our streets, bear too evident demonstration “that God is not honoured with their lips.”

Here then can be but little promising
ground

ground of "upright conversation," unless it can be hoped to improve from the influence and example of a more refined and superior rank. Let us see how the case stands with *them*; how much they surpass in purity, in proportion to their allowed advantages.

I will neither offend your ears, trespass upon your time, or disgrace the honour of this place so far, as to dwell minutely upon the loose and profligate habits of the more gay and dissipated; not even so far as relates only to the strain of their general discourse: for, as the apostle says, "it is a shame even "to speak of those things that are done of "them in secret:" and of such I think we may safely conclude, that they will not furnish what the apostle terms "the example "of believers in purity of conversation." In short, it is too sufficiently known, not to be grievously lamented by the sober and serious part of mankind, that such an abuse of understanding and riches should subsist among that part of the creation, which is so conspicuously and highly blessed with every endowment and ability to improve their
nature,

nature, and glorify the goodness of their Heavenly Benefactor.

Yet, from a strange perverseness in the human heart, we see numbers of those who should be the flower of the rising generation, descending to a level with the lowest and most contemptible of men, and glorying in a rivalry of the meanest chicanery. I allude to the destructive practice of public gaming, in all its descriptions. It is almost incredible that such degeneracy of manners should exist, did not daily opportunities afford conviction of it.

I said, just now, that but little prospect of amendment could be looked for but from the pattern of the powerful and well informed; but, to our concern and surprise, we shall find that the rapid growth of iniquity in the vulgar, instead of being checked by the good example of their betters, is considerably increased by the baneful effects of their pernicious courses; and to ungoverned extravagance, jointly with the supineness of authority, we must indisputably attribute the corruption of the community. A total disregard to every thing serious, instructive,

structive, or even decent, cannot be expected to inspire an attention to religion and morality, or indeed to promote suitable modesty of behaviour. However disgraceful, therefore, it is literally true, that, from the gross licentiousness of many in high life, we frequently see the order of society inverted; the flagitious deportment of the vulgar has gained the ascendancy of example upon many, and there is little other distinction but in equipage and attendants; the very *dress* of some being as servilely affected as their vices.

I will illustrate this in only one particular, which will confirm what I have advanced beyond a possibility of contradiction. The unprofitable, low, and infamous habit of common swearing, that heavy reproach to a christian land, professing the gospel upon the purest and reformed principles—this should seem to be peculiarly the offspring of ignorance and neglect, and the profoundest disregard of every thing that is holy and good; and one would think, for that reason, it was only to be found among the *dregs* of the people; consequently, that it should be so shamefully practised by those
 who

who must know much better, is not less dishonourable than grievous.

There is not one single plea that can be produced in extenuation of this odious vice; no passion, no appetite, no sensual enjoyment whatever; not even that of *habit*, which in other iniquitous attainments excites a powerful sympathy for the offender, when an humble resolution to *reform* is discoverable: for various and pitiable may have been the circumstances which have led to the establishment of other faults. On the contrary, persons most exercised in *this* wickedness, can refrain in the society of respectable people, in the hearing of the most modest and delicate sex; but, to the utter disgrace of our present times, it has pervaded every order of men without exception. The presence of God's ministers, as formerly, cannot repress it; alas! *their* influence is universally diminished: and, truly shocking to assert! even females, and in the most exalted stations, where beauty, elegance, and every other grace combine to raise the fairest expectations, most unseemingly partake of this foul degeneracy, profaning the sacred name with hardened unconcern;

concern; and thus sinking the dignity of their rank, they forfeit all that natural respect and homage due to the modesty of the female character.

How different the manners of that age, the examples of those justly celebrated persons, who are recorded never to have mentioned the name of God but with a sensible pause before it!—men eminent for sterling sense and the soundest learning, as well as both private and public virtue; no visionaries, no enthusiasts, but men of sober thought and refined reflection, whose deep enquiries into the works of nature, and just contemplations upon its wonderful Author, led them to confirm the first principles of all religion, the being of a God, and his self-existence; to adore him worthily, and to affix to the mention of his name the honour due unto it; whose pious practice in this respect will perpetuate *their* fame, as much as it must condemn the abominable degeneracy of posterity.

But what shall we further think, when this vice is often used as a seasoning or ornament of discourse, or most absurdly to

lend it a sound of importance? whereas it certainly pollutes and discredits the very wittiest effort to which it is united; and, far from giving consequence, weakens the power it was intended to afford, from the triteness and vulgarity of the custom.

I know it has likewise been defended as unavoidable, if not in a degree serviceable, in certain professions; but surely with as little truth as good sense. In one of these professions in which every species of profligacy is supposed to abound, the contrary must be granted; for in the army no officer is so much attended to as the fair-spoken, dispassionate man, who regulates his conduct, and enforces his orders, by cool and determined expressions: whereas imprecations and abuse, which generally attend the ebullitions of passion, almost always lose the effect they are intended to give; and the reason is evident—this kind of language being unhappily so familiar to the parties corrected, and so constantly and indiscriminately applied on all occasions, for slight as well as heavier offences, it is little regarded; besides that a consciousness of its impropriety

priety is often, upon reflection, the cause of withdrawing or mitigating a merited punishment.

As to another honourable profession, the common men of which are generally held to be, if possible, more dead to every sense of religious influence and decorum than the former, I have been told, from most respectable authority, that the whole complement of a ship of war have been kept in such becoming restraint from the crime of swearing, that scarce an oath was ever heard on board, and yet the service of the king and country not less successfully or brilliantly performed: proof sufficient that reformation is not impracticable in the most dissipated subjects, and therefore the neglect of it more justly reprehensible. But this happy consequence must proceed, as in the above case, from laudable diligence in the commander, whose officers respectfully copied the conscientious and illustrious example of their excellent and honourable chief, instead of falling into the wicked and useless practice which the unrestrained licentiousness of their men must necessarily produce.

I shall now proceed to take a further view

of the state and tendency of modern conversation among a very different class of men ; and try how near it approaches to the description of scriptural propriety, *i. e.* “ whether they are holy in all manner of conversation.”

The most respectable situation in life, and that which seems to promise a considerable portion of rational enjoyment, is the middle order. Equally removed from the attacks of ambition, and the anxieties of dependence, such persons have leisure to enrich their minds with sound learning, and to attend with less worldly interruption to the care of their souls : in reason we may therefore conclude that they have laid in a large store of valuable matter both for the rational entertainment of their acquaintance, and the improvement of those with whom they are more nearly allied ; particularly, that they have not been negligent in acquiring that saving knowledge which is to profit them eternally. In that judicious exercise they would reap the glory of imprinting upon others the inestimable value of the *one thing needful*. But is it so ? We might resolve the question in our own breasts, without further

further enquiry. Take the most candid survey of what passes in the society of the very people who will shudder at the naming an atrocious crime; who, as far as the merit of worldly diligence can extend, deserve great praise; who are regular in the stated performance of religious exercises; who are becomingly cautious in the care of their children, to preserve them as much as possible from the contagion of that vicious example which they sorely feel threatening them on all sides; and yet, with all this flattering appearance, can it be said that the tenor of their general discourse, either in public or private, will bear the strict sense of such “ a conversation as will assure them “ the salvation of God ?”

We must confess, from our intimate experience of the trite and unedifying topics which prevail in many circles, that the case is very different—that the misfortunes, the failings, the concerns of our neighbours, the current intelligence of public affairs, the insignificant preference of the reigning factions, the hasty and variable judgment upon the conduct of some public character, with the uninteresting arguments

such impertinencies supply, furnish in their turns the stock of conversation; and, if we add to the enrichment of these subjects the extraordinary satisfaction of *contradicting* at the *next* meeting every article we so judiciously *decided* at the *last*, it will afford no overstrained sketch of polite discourse. That there are exceptions to this observation, and that even some of the above topics may be innocently employed, I will readily admit; but that it is too frequently otherwise, I think cannot be denied.

Such unprofitable intercourse, such waste of time, is the more reprobable, because the improvements of our day, in a variety of pleasing arts and instructive discoveries in philosophy, yield abundant opportunity for the exercise of genius, and the acquisition of a knowledge far more worthy the study of rational creatures. If then what I have hazarded in this picture bears any resemblance to the original, it is quite superfluous to ask, whether the inexhaustible fund afforded in the works of creation, the government of Providence, and especially the article of *religion*, ever finds admittance in such company. No — as well might the polite

littest courtier expect a ready welcome, and suitable entertainment to his character, if intruding among a society of beggars : unpractised and unprepared, the sudden visitor would both disgust and disconcert them. And yet subjects like these can alone form the just grounds of an “ upright conversation,” of such intercourse as will fit us for the society of heaven ; and dare we assert that the contrary is consistent with an enlightened mind, and the profession of Christianity ? Certainly it is not ; but the truth is, few entertain just notions of religion, or study in what it consists, and what is inconsistent with it. People are entirely absorbed by the pomps and vanities of this life, and the attraction of sensual objects ; and “ where their treasure is, there will “ their hearts be also :”—“ the opening of “ such lips will not be concerning right “ things.”

Should you raise your expectations of a more valuable account from the conversation of those who are engaged in too important pursuits to spare time for such trifling as the above, I fear “ an upright conversation,” in the Psalmist’s acceptance

of it, will be as rare a discovery. "Let
 "your conversation be without covetous-
 "ness," will be a hard precept for persons
 immersed in pecuniary dealings ; we shall
 too seldom find men involved in a multipli-
 city of temporal concerns, attending mi-
 nutely but to their own share of merit in
 the disposition and success of them. The
 inspection and providence of the Supreme
 Director, and their being now only upon
trial (under his government) for far more
 exalted occupations, scarcely ever enter into
 their thoughts. They will provide for
 making up no accounts but *earthly* ones :
 the sound of that word against them only
 redoubles their diligence to drown it. Their
 religion, like other obligations incumbent
 on them, they attend to as prescribed by
 law ; and as no real spirit of it is evident in
 their *lives*, it can hardly be looked for in
 their *conversation*.

But let us carry the enquiry still higher ;
 and, bold as the stricture may appear, it
 would be unbecoming my situation here to
 make *any exceptions* on such an occasion :
 for when we consider the serious import of
 a "right conversation ;" that our practice
 of

of it, in the purest sense, is the sole and necessary qualification that can secure us happiness when time shall be no more; that, to confirm this truth, so great a reward is promised as exceeds our fondest imagination, and the most woful punishment as sure a consequent of our neglect to cultivate it—every degree of partiality or remissness becomes sinful: upon this subject (in imitation of our heavenly Judge) *we must be no respecters of persons.*

It may be fairly questioned therefore, in the last place, whether among persons possessed of the choicest understandings, and adorned besides with learning, whose peculiar professions engage them more closely in the study of serious subjects—whether even among these the true sense of the text is duly attended to in their private communication with each other, or strictly and uniformly in their public dissertations—whether the vanity of human knowledge is not too conspicuous a mover in some of their researches, the indulgence of mere curiosity in others, and their discourse necessarily tinctured with both. Are they earnest in giving the glory and honour due unto God in all his works?

and

and do they resolve every difficulty that puzzles their narrow capacities into the unsearchable depths of his unerring wisdom, instead of doubting, if not his creative, at least his preserving hand, and forming systems and conclusions on the sandy foundation of their own confused ideas? In their various disquisitions, does the state of *religion* furnish a frequent subject of discourse? Is it, as it should be, the ultimate end of their enquiries, whether it is left to go on now as being necessarily united with worldly polity, and to take its course; or is the expediency of some degree of higher aid still granted needful for its advancement, and duly recommended? and, from the sad neglect to implore this aid, do they lament its daily melancholy decay in all ranks and orders of society, and consult its honour by the most strenuous endeavours to recover its power, and vindicate its advantages to mankind? Are these otherwise well-informed persons deeply penetrated with the truth of its divine origin? and do they treat it as a vital principle, as the only food of the soul? Has its most essential branch a proper share of their notice, and a powerful influence

ence upon their lives (I mean the sublime
 and interesting mysteries of the gospel)? Do
 they sufficiently dwell, when a transient
 attention is paid to this grand subject, up-
 on the necessary supply of Divine grace
 and assistance to comprehend these serious
 truths; and that God, if we neglect to ap-
 ply for his succour, will despise all the vain
 wisdom of our words? Are they "so nou-
 rished in faith and sound doctrine," as to
 be zealous for the progress of Christ's king-
 dom upon earth; believing that for its com-
 pletion in heaven the creation itself took
 place, and every dispensation that was pub-
 lished until the coming of that King, and
 Priest, and Prophet, who presides over it?
 Do they shew themselves convinced, through
 an humble and stedfast faith, that the king-
 dom of Christ is already begun in us, if we
 do not forfeit it by our own faults? Doth
 their general discourse favour of these things?
 If, when the dread summons of our depar-
 ture hence is issued, we are found wholly
 engrossed by vanity and trifles, by worldly
 cares and contrivances, in the pursuits of
 riches and worldly honours, or in the nice-
 ties of language, and the bare possession of
 human

human learning, without having learnt any thing of God, or acquired the requisite qualifications for his future service; if we have been engaged in those works which tend to increase our corruption, instead of using the gracious means of improving our imperfect nature—how, in the name of common sense, can we hope to partake of the happiness of the Divine nature? We can only expect to become slaves of the master whose servants we are *here*; nor can we pray the Lord to have mercy on us with any solid hope, when, during the whole course of a life of trial, we have abused every merciful opportunity afforded us. If some such subjects as these do not occupy their frequent and earnest attention, and also engage the support of those best able to give them encouragement; and, moreover, without they likewise implore the Divine Revealer of all truths to “enlighten their minds, and “give them all boldness to speak the word;” the most captivating productions of the imagination, the most brilliant fallies of wit, and the profoundest erudition and eloquence, will all fall very far short of the essence of an “upright conversation;” and though

the former may discover the command of every other attainment, it will never, by these means only, arrive at that of eternal salvation; which is the prize of our high calling, the principal object worth contending for, the sure reward of the poorest and most illiterate of you all who continue in well-doing, as well as the richest and most learned of your superiors. With a truly grateful sense then of God's universal and astonishing love towards his fallen creatures, let us all strive henceforth so to frame our conduct and improve our conversation here, that we may, comparatively, say with the Apostle, "Our conversation is in heaven, " from whence we look for the Saviour " our Lord Jesus Christ," who will bestow his unspeakable rewards upon all who are fitted to receive them: and for which that we may ever studiously prepare ourselves, God of his infinite mercy grant, through the merits, aid, and mediation of the same blessed Lord. To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed, &c.

S E R-

the former may follow the command of
every other command, it will never be
its duty only, but its duty to do
itself which is the duty of our
calling, the principal duty which con-
firms the law reward of the poor, and
not illiterate of you all who continue in
well-doing, as well as the highest and best
learned of your superiors. With a truly
generous and liberal mind, the universal and
indefinite love towards all human creatures
let us all strive to be united in love
and improve our common life.
that we may, comparatively, be well the
Apostle. "Our common life is in love."
"From which we look for the reward
of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reward
his faithful servants when all who are
ready to receive him, will be
we may ever find only a true out-
look of his infinite mercy, grace, and
mercy, and the mission of the
blessed Lord. To whom, with thank-
and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed, etc.

28 SE60

S E R M O N IX.

A

CHARITY SERMON.

"Homines ad Deos nulla re propius accedunt, quam
"salutem hominibus dando." Cic.

"—— Deorum
"Muneribus sapienter uti." Hor.

S E R M O N



CHARITY

"Hominibus ad Deum talia re propria accedunt"
"salutem hominibus dando."

"Deorum"
"Mendaces sapienter ait."

S E R M O N IX.

JOB, xxix. 11, 12, 13.

*When the ear heard me, then it blessed me;
and when the eye saw me, it gave witness
to me; because I delivered the poor that
cried, and the fatherless, and him that had
none to help him: the blessing of him that
was ready to perish came upon me, and I
caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.*

WE are assembled here this day, my
brethren, to hallow the holy Sab-
bath of the Lord God. By offering up
our praises to him for his mercies, and by
acknowledging our great unworthiness, we
have in a degree demonstrated our grati-
tude, and engaged him to continue his fa-
vours unto us. In the solemn liturgy of
our church, we have this day confessed our
manifold sins, our innate wretchedness, our
VOL. I. P forgiveness

forgiveness of our enemies; and we have crowned this christian exercise by our humble and hearty prayers for their amendment. Thus have we testified what fervent charity we bear to one another; and with the warmest satisfaction I can add, that we are about to complete the sacred worship of the morning by a work of the purest love, as being more particularly met together for the commendable and pious purpose of relieving the urgent necessities of our indigent brethren, in voluntary contributions toward an institution equally engaging, useful, and praiseworthy. As the main purport of my discourse is to recommend the practice of charity to your most serious consideration, I shall humbly submit the best of my weak endeavours for that end; and that my sincere design may more clearly be understood, permit me to offer something first upon that virtue in general.

Charity, then, is but another name for mercy; and it flows (for it must be active if it is genuine) from pure benevolence, and tenderness of heart. The most compendious, and at the same time one of the most comprehensive views
of

of this virtue, is to be found in the 13th chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. I shall not now enlarge upon it in that sublime and spiritual sense in which the apostle there employs the word; but only specify it generally, as the very basis of christianity, without which all other religious attainments will be pronounced deficient by a God of love. We may term it, therefore, an impulse of the soul, inclining us towards every thing that is tender, humble, merciful, forgiving, and the like christian perfections. Now the product of this upright sentiment must be actions of the most benevolent and endearing nature; and to attempt at separating the essence of real charity is utterly impossible, the intellectual and active branches of it being as indissolubly connected as cause and effect: for to believe a person capable of experiencing the most persuasive workings of pity, and (though able) not *willing* to alleviate the distress affecting him, would be as absurd as to suppose *that* man's professions to be sincere, who, beholding a fellow-creature in danger [of his life, should proclaim his affliction in

the most violent terms, and at the same time stand by an idle spectator of his destruction. Whence we may infer, that to be uncharitably disposed, in any sense, is a sure mark of a hard and unfeeling heart: it is a temper that cannot be too carefully corrected, as it deprives us of the most exquisite pleasure in life; sinks us below the contracted endowments of the brute creation, which frequently exhibits sympathy and attention to the distress of their species; and robs us of that needful hope which we are all inclined and have occasion to encourage, “ that we shall “ receive mercy.” But where benevolent sentiments prevail, we may fairly trust that the blessing of the apostle will accompany us—“ The Lord grant unto such, “ that they may find favour in the day “ of the Lord:” for as good works are truly said to be the best tokens of a sound faith, so charity, without them, is a mere system of the brain, with which, unless our practice corresponds, our inactive theory will prove reproach and condemnation.

As an introduction then to a thorough sense of our duty in this grand article, it
may

may not be amiss to consider the nature of our several callings and situations in the world.

It would be to question the wisdom and goodness of God, to suppose that he has formed any one being but for some gracious purpose; and even the unequal ranks of individuals in *this* world will appear to any man, on the least reflection, as wisely intended for the due support of the community at large. Extraordinary abilities are bestowed on some, to assist them in framing laws, in dispensing justice, in pronouncing judgment, and to enable men to discharge with wisdom the arduous task of government. Skill in arts and sciences falls to the share of others, that men may be variously and usefully employed; that none may have a plea for idleness; that the human mind may be cultivated and adorned; and that new discoveries may be made in the stupendous works of nature, from age to age. Riches, honours, titles, keep the current of social life flowing with dignity and profitable emulation, afford the means of employing the industrious, and encouraging the ingenious.

And some, we see, it hath pleased Providence to send into the world, poor, destitute, and afflicted. Yet herein we may observe the wonderful goodness and mercy of our Maker towards his creatures; as, generally speaking, he bestows on each a mind properly adapted to their respective situations, lest the lot of the needy and laborious might become too grievous, and more than they could bear; and that stations more splendid, and posts of eminence, might (through beneficent exertion) rightly fit *their* owners. Yet from this inequality God derives glory; and each of us, as we wisely or foolishly make choice, our happiness or misery: for doubtless he has not given wealth or power to some, talents and the opportunity of improving to others, in vain; but as trials of their intrinsic worth, as gifts to be employed and accounted for: to which end, objects are placed before us in every point of view, to attract our notice, to engage our abilities, and to excite our compassion.

To imagine we were formed solely to gratify our own unruly passions, or to consume the fruits of the earth in luxury, extravagance,

travagance, or supine indulgence, would be to doubt the purity and wisdom of our Creator, who stamped his image upon mankind for far nobler purposes. To what end has he vouchsafed his various benefits and blessings to many of us, but to enable us to pursue the gentle paths of mercy, to render us serviceable to one another, and to demonstrate by our generous conduct that the All-wise Parent of nature has blessed us with souls as unbounded as our possessions? for, under this gross veil of mortality, nothing so strongly indicates the latent spark of the divinity within us, as a compassionate heart animated to vigorous acts of benevolence.

But as the universal state of nature is a state of depravity, as we are all sadly fallen from our primeval purity, hence proceeds the selfish and unfeeling use we too often make of God's liberal gifts. Being blinded with the dazzling splendour of vain riches, and not knowing how to turn them to a proper interest, or rather wanting in fortitude to adopt the habit; far from employing them to purposes of godliness (and so making friends of the mammon of un-
P 4 righteousness),

righteousness), we convert them to the service of such unworthy purposes as will rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us.

This reflection aptly leads me to the obvious praise of those endeavours we are this day met to cherish and enforce.

It is an observation equally sagacious as persuasive, that every good action brings with it its own reward even *here*; and this alone, one would think, ought to be sufficient incitement to the practice of virtue. But, alas! so lamentably are we debased, and in so contemptible a degree doth selfishness possess some men, that even the most awful threatenings of vengeance from him who is truth itself—nay (to our utter shame it must be spoken) the most engaging and repeated promises of inconceivable and eternal happiness—have not influence sufficient to persuade and *reform* us.

Wherefore, as the various tempers and opinions of men require different arguments to direct their actions, I will now employ some *worldly* motives on this occasion, which in their application may be-
neficially

neficially explain the nature and end of these particular charities.

It has been a solid maxim among the best ordered and most opulent states that ever flourished, that the proper support and judicious education of their youth, was a matter of the highest consequence; and that chiefly to their attention in this weighty business, they attributed the greatest share of their success in war, or wealth at home. Considered in this light, such establishments as these must be consummately political, essentially useful; for as a neglect in providing subsistence for the offspring of the necessitous must naturally tend to lessen the number of the common people, and of course both weaken and impoverish the state (for what will avail our fertility of soil, the situation of our ports, or the excellence of climate, to a desolated or deserted country?) so if the children of the poor are only suffered to exist, without due care being taken of their health and morals, without receiving that instruction which must fit them for the service of their country, the consequences will be still more dreadful: for besides that men of good natural parts, and
honest

honest dispositions, will in time emigrate to other kingdoms (having no early ties to endear them to their home), to the immediate advantage of those states, and our double loss; the remainder will probably fall victims to idleness and temptations, and through hard necessity, prompted by vicious inclination, and unrestrained by moral influence, will betake themselves to such iniquitous and illicit courses as will finally incur the just penalty of their country's laws; and thus (dreadful even in idea!) forfeit their unhappy lives, a sacrifice to ungoverned passions, in deplorable consequence of the inattention of the legislature to their safety.

Now the advantages of the institution we are here met to support, are indisputably evident, since it effectually tends to prevent the fatal inconveniences above described. Hence we may reasonably conclude, that no charitable appointment whatever can deservedly claim a greater attention from every worthy member of society.

Still, though nothing can be more natural or becoming than that each individual should contribute his utmost towards the benefit
and

and good order of the general body, yet I am aware that we live in an age when too many examples convince us, that this principle, however laudable, and even necessary, has no force to affect the dispositions of every one. Our own immediate interest (and that often in the most trifling relations) is too apt to engross our whole care; and the consideration of our own particular profit, is the ultimate object by which our views are bounded. Few, I am inclined to hope, of such contracted notions are to be found among my present hearers; nevertheless it may not be amiss to take some notice of the singular advantages which each may enjoy, who is come hither to use "hospitality without grudging."

There is scarce a book in the Old Testament, or a chapter in the New one, but warmly recommends the true spirit of benevolence; and to the strongest reasons for our observance of this amiable virtue, adds likewise the most comfortable and encouraging promise of sure reward. With Saint Paul it is the very essence of christianity: "Now the end of the commandment is
"charity, out of a pure heart, and of good
"conscience,

“ conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” We are told by one of the wisest and most magnificent of princes, that “ by mercy and truth iniquity is purged ;” and the holy Psalmist, in his observations on the fruits of mercy, uses these encouraging words: “ Never yet saw I the-righteous (that is, the merciful man) forsaken, or his seed begging their bread.” What an enlivening hope is here, what an invigorating promise—that the blessing shall descend to our latest posterity ! Better arguments than these surely cannot be advanced to engage the cultivation of every propensity in us towards doing good ; besides all which, the very act itself brings along with it the most delightful pleasure. The secret joy arising in a tender heart upon relieving the unfortunate and wretched, cannot easily be described. The comfortable conviction of having employed a portion of our possessions according to the wise designs of Providence, that we are gratefully discharging our duty, and promoting his glory, must infallibly procure us lasting peace ; the blessings that will follow our humane actions in this life, and the vast
fund

fund of happiness that awaits our pious performances in the next, do not only encourage us to persist in good works, but largely compensate our utmost endeavours. Nor can I here omit this additional consolation to many, as a general incitement to the discharge of this duty, that a proportionable share of reward attends the less opulent giver. "Give of what thou hast, according to thy ability," saith the apostle, and we are told by our blessed Saviour himself, that the widow's mite was as well accepted as if she had been enabled to contribute more abundantly, because "she gave of all that she had."

And here we must acknowledge how unwilling we are to deny ourselves in many articles which demand far greater sums, which often deceive our expectations even in enjoyment, and seldom prove advantageous in the end. How ready then ought we to be in such sacrifices as these, which offer themselves with such rich allurements, such valuable considerations!

By these trifling disbursements from our large stock of abundance, we are purchasing treasure for ourselves in heaven. "He
" who

“ who giveth unto the poor, lendeth unto
 “ the Lord, who will repay the interest
 “ an hundred fold.” Surely these inducements will tempt the most penurious, nay the most selfish mind. I shall close the exhortation therefore with this scriptural admonition—“ Whatever ye do, do it for the glory of God:” and remember ye crown your beneficence by bestowing from the heart; “ the Lord loveth a cheerful giver.”

But observations may be still advanced which perhaps will appear more interesting and satisfactory to those less liberally inclined, if any such are now among us, and with whom temporal benefits may have great weight.

It may without any impropriety be supposed, for instance, that by the blessing of Heaven some of these children, who now so happily experience your indulgent and seasonable benefactions, may hereafter more than sufficiently repay your generosity. When the fostering hand of time shall have matured their understandings; when, through the means of that learning with which your beneficent contributions have furnished them, their genius and abilities shall

shall unfold ; when you shall behold them at once a general service and credit to their country, a welcome support to their aged or needy parents—will not your particular share of so glorious an harvest largely refund your most generous liberality ?

Again, let us reflect that the natural state of things, in this transitory life, is daily liable to change ; and we may be assured it is not without the permission of Omniscience itself. “ I will pull down,” saith he, “ the mighty from their seat, and will exalt the humble and meek ;” almost accounting as it were, by this expression, for the many strange revolutions the experience of every one may have observed. It is not impossible, therefore, that unforeseen accidents may, in course of time, reduce the posterity of those who value themselves chiefly on account of their present prosperity and exalted stations, to the dependant and affecting condition of helpless, necessitous, and (but for your bounty) unfriended children. More surprising vicissitudes do hourly take place ; when therefore, in addition to success and credit, gratitude shall adorn the

the lives of these pleading orphans, with what joy may you apply to yourselves the promises of the gospel—"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!" When a due exertion of their talents shall have procured them plenty; when prosperity, perhaps affluence, shall be the effect of their steady perseverance in their several professions; with what becoming exaltation, with what solid comfort, will you reflect upon having proved such tender, useful benefactors! Nor imagine that they will be unmindful of such considerate and affectionate patronage: their praises, their good offices, will always attend you *here*; their unwearied prayers shall be registered for you in *heaven*.

Now, besides the effect which the uncertainty of human affairs may work upon some men to prevail upon them to be merciful, besides the excess of recompence awaiting generous conduct, there is another motive which operates powerfully upon many, and that is, sympathy, or fellow feeling; which is not peculiar to human nature, as I slightly intimated before, but extends itself in a degree throughout the whole animal creation;

tion ; and is implanted in man, as we may suppose, for the very purpose of befriending and relieving our afflicted and suffering brethren. Wherefore without doubt but that a share of these finer feelings of human nature are still cherished in your bosoms, I will not attempt to excite your compassion, or play upon your passions by any fictitious or laboured tale of misery : but as upon this particular occasion it must be expected I should plead the cause of those objects in our view, by every moving argument the subject can suggest ; permit me humbly to urge your most serious regard for the disconsolate case of the forlorn and dejected widow ; for the sorrowful and piteous situation of fatherless innocence.

When the comfortless and needy parent views the tender helpless pledges of her affection on the very point of sinking into poverty and ruin ; when, deprived of their father, friend, and sole support, the infant mourners by fruitless wailing add to the bitter anguish of her mind ; with scarce the means to preserve herself, in heaviness of heart, unknown, unfriended, whither shall they bend their hopeless way ? where sue

for mercy? Why—HERE;—here benevolence, with cheering aspect, deals out comfort; here the wretched find a refuge, the sorrowful have their tears dried up. You have here, my friends, the living argument before you, which no eloquence can equal, which rivals all persuasion—the hapless sons of misery—the pleading offspring of misfortune. Here, by the pious interposition of your munificence, see, sorrow puts on the face of joy, wretchedness is relieved, and innocence protected. From what a train of evils you defend these harmless children! Every species of iniquity that owes its rise to idleness and neglect, by this your commendable establishment, is smothered in the bud; whilst industry, virtue, and public benefit, evince the blessed alternative.

And now, before I conclude these humble efforts to promote beneficence, I must briefly address myself in particular to *you* for whose advantage this worthy assembly are now met together; and let me exhort you earnestly to shew yourselves deserving of their christian care. Ye are now in the tender state of childhood, an age when Providence, out of his unbounded wisdom, has ordained

ordained that the evils attending us through this rugged journey should not materially engage our notice, otherwise the mind would not have leisure to cultivate its powers, or admit, without frequent hindrance, and greater difficulty, the knowledge adapted to its particular faculties. And as perception and experience alone can render you thoroughly sensible of the many dangers and miseries to which human nature is exposed; of course, you cannot now duly comprehend the utmost value of the services done unto you—by what exceeding great obligations you are bound to these your public friends and fathers. But you are all old enough to feel and know the calamity of *want*, the pain of *sickness*, and wretchedness of filth and nakedness. From these miseries their feeling bosoms have relieved you; wherefore, let it be the constant duty of your lives, to merit these benefactions from time to time bestowed upon you. Be dutiful, submissive, and attentive to those set in authority over you; honest and upright in all your ways, and studious to improve; that their benefits may not be wasted on you. But, above all, forget not your daily grate-
Q 2
ful

ful homage to Almighty God, your heavenly Father, whose grace and mercy has raised you up such friends. "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth."

And to you to whose lot it hath fallen to be the guardians and instructors of these children of the public; let me implore tenderness in your care, moderation in your discipline, and conscientious perseverance in whatever you teach them; that this precious season of their lives may not be lost: and as you are chiefly concerned with them, consider the hardness of their lot at best, and render their state as comfortable as possible; for you cannot be ignorant what an important charge is on your hands, and in great measure their future conduct will be placed to the account of your present diligence or neglect. Be cautious therefore in your own good example, and prove yourselves worthy the reward you will certainly reap if you do well.

To conclude: As Heaven has most indulgently dealt its abundant and undeserved mercies towards us, and moreover given us a heart to do good with our possessions (without which riches will but be the cause
of

of our condemnation), let us return God our most hearty praises for the same; and that we may render this and every other charitable work acceptable to him, “let us contribute cheerfully to the utmost of our power.” Let us reflect what a wide difference there is between the comforts and conveniences we and our children enjoy, to what the humble lot of the unfortunate must be content with: let us cherish therefore the golden maxim of “doing unto others as we would they should do unto us.” It is the very best direction I can recommend to actuate your bounty. Let us in one view consider the precariousness of life, the certainty of death, that we cannot take our riches with us, and if we could, they would avail us nought. Let us sensibly employ them as our blessed Saviour hath advised us, by “putting on bowels of tender mercy, and whilst it is yet to-day by making our calling and election sure.”

How easy, how delightful is the way to eternal happiness, when the means of obtaining it procure us the most valuable present advantages and pleasures! What an in-

expressible portion of gratitude is due to Heaven, for appointing us a method so different from the lot of many of its candidates! O may all present have substantial grounds to console themselves in the inimitable language of the text—"When the ear
 "heard me, then it blessed me; and when
 "the eye saw me, it gave witness to me;
 "because I delivered the poor that cried,
 "and the fatherless, and him who had none
 "to help him. The blessing of him that
 "was ready to perish came upon me, and
 "I caused the widow's heart to sing for
 "joy."

Lastly, Let us remember that good works will affect our children when we are no more. How transporting the thought, when the springs of life are drying up, and body and soul on the very verge of separation, to be able to bequeath to the *dearest* part of us blessings which shall never depart from them!

And when the last loud summons shall awaken you from that rest which is promised to them "who die in the Lord, and
 "whose works follow them," with what transports inconceivable will you rejoice,
 that

that you have been "rich in good deeds, " ready to distribute, willing to communicate !" What a profusion of unalterable gladness will spring up in your souls, when every diligent and faithful steward of these temporal good things shall be called to the fullest enjoyment of that endless glory that is prepared for them ! Then shall the ravishing welcome of " well done, good and " faithful servant," prove the blessed warrant of your admission to never-fading bliss. Then will every weak and erroneous distinction cease, both of men and things, as well as religious doctrines. Faith and works will appear to be one and the same thing essentially, as inseparable as effect and cause. The general admission of all good men will abundantly testify the *reason* of their admission. No intricate and perplexing mazes of human learning will prevent its being seen, that pure and active virtue is necessary to salvation, and flows as naturally from the source of an humble regard to God's word, and the grace of his holy Spirit obtained through faith in the offices of Jesus Christ, from the beginning, as the choicest fruit can alone be produced from that root which furnishes its

peculiar quality. Then will it be perceived why it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and yet that *he may* enter therein; because nothing is impossible with God: and if such apply to him to enable them to conquer the temptations attending upon power and opulence, and employ their interest and abundance to the wise and good ends for which they were sent, why then they will experience a superiority of station, even in heaven, in proportion to the weight of their charge, and difficulty of the trial.

On the other hand, the poor and neglected, the unfortunate and persecuted, if they receive their lot with pious resignation, looking humbly to him who directeth all events to the glorious purposes of ultimate goodness and wisdom; *they* will also perceive that there are treasures in store for them, that will neither make themselves wings, nor condemn them. But this I beseech every one present to lay to heart, that “now” is the time to secure the riches that perish not.”

To you who have the means, as the opportunity is manifestly great of doing present

sent good, so will your danger and punishment be if you neglect it. The declaration of your Saviour himself, that every proportionate mercy shewn to his afflicted servants (who are visited in gracious wisdom for your trial, equally as their own) shall receive a due reward, is the strongest conclusion I can make to the subject. May God render it efficacious through the influence of his good Spirit, in touching all your hearts for the benefit of your fellow-creatures. Permit me to close my humble exertions in this labour of love with this appeal:—

Suppose only for a moment that we were assured the end of time drew near, and that our *present* testimony of benevolence should be the positive passport into the blissful regions of eternity; can there be a doubt but an immediate general ardour would shew itself, to obtain the claim to happiness by the most generous contributions? The application is no ways forced. Not a person present can be certain but that this is the *last* opportunity he may ever have of *shewing mercy*; of obeying the call to use his possessions wisely; and that a
noble

noble denial of all narrow selfish restraint may not lay the happy foundation of future improvement in godliness and good works, which an habitual closeness and hardness of heart will as naturally *prevent*.

Wherefore, my brethren, if you have abundance, bestow your alms accordingly, And do ye also not forget, to whom fortune has been dealt more sparingly, that "whoever shall give to drink to these little ones (comparatively speaking) one cup of cold water only, verily," saith our blessed Lord, "he shall in no wise lose his reward."

Now, &c.

28 SE60

S E R.

S E R M O N X.

A Thanksgiving Sermon on the PEACE.

Nihil tam popolare quam pacem, quam concordiam, quam
otium reperiemus. Cic.

Nulla salus bello.

VIRG.



S E R M O N X.

PSALM XXX. 12, 13.

Thou hast turned our heaviness into joy : thou hast put off our sackcloth, and girded us with gladness : therefore shall every good man sing of thy praise without ceasing.

IF an holy zeal for the honour of the Almighty God and his service, can be supposed to operate more powerfully at one time than another, it may justly be expected to appear upon such an occasion as the present. By the injunction of our most gracious Sovereign, and the authority of the rulers of the church, we are called upon at this particular time, to demonstrate our profoundest gratitude for the happy return of a general peace ; to offer up our united praises to the Supreme Being, and to glorify his name for the peculiar blessings we have received at his hands : and surely we have
an

an additional and weighty cause, to prompt the readier sacrifice of thanksgiving, when we consider how universal are the benefits from this event—that every individual is a partaker of the mercy; which is further magnified by this consideration, that the too general carelessness in point of religious conduct, renders us little deserving these high marks of God's forbearance and favour; it should make us duly apprehensive also of what must follow, if reformation does not succeed such mighty obligations to gratitude: and we may truly exult in the pious language of the royal Psalmist, and say, “This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” The words of my text very naturally lead to a review of the calamities this country has suffered by the war; and the hazardous and alarming situation it has been reduced to at several periods, “as beset by great troubles, and war on every side.” They urge us, from a serious contemplation of the imminent dangers we have escaped, to a religious use of the surprising deliverances we have experienced; so that we may justly exclaim,

exclaim, "Thou hast turned our heaviness
"into joy."

That I may impress you with a becoming sense of all these particulars, I will make it my business, in what follows, to represent to you the grievous consequences of war in general; to prove to you, that it is among the severest of God's visitations for the sins of men: and, on the other hand, what invaluable advantages attend the blessings of peace. This will be necessary to convince us of the dreadful effects of a sinful perseverance, even in *this* life, and to incline us, by grave reflection, to put a just value on God's tender mercies, and render our humble and grateful praises this day a more acceptable service to the Lord.

It was customary with the Jews, when under the course of any heavy infliction, either for private delinquency, or national ingratitude, to subject themselves to the deepest self-humiliation, and express the sense of their failings and unworthiness, by signs and actions of the most mortifying description: such as clothing themselves in the coarsest and most depreciating attire they could invent; fasting and praying in sackcloth

sackcloth and ashes; in allusion to which religious self-punishment, all societies of Christians have retained the custom of keeping fast before the Lord, when by a succession of disastrous events the hand of Heaven too evidently appears over them for evil. The application of these suppliant addresses were so frequent during the late melancholy contest in which our armies were employed, that we may fairly conclude from repeated misadventures, that “the Lord did not go out with our hosts;” that his good time was not yet come “to put off our sackcloth, and gird us with gladness;” that the punishment of our iniquities was not yet completed, or our pride laid sufficiently low; and that, till by the justice and continuance of his anger, we were made in some degree sensible of our deserts, and inclined to distrust the vain ability of our own strength, we were suffered to fall an easy prey to our foes on all sides; though talents, valour, and every obvious means of *human* aid combined to assure success: but as his wrath is ever tempered with kindness toward his creatures, even the most unworthy, for “in the midst of anger
 “he

“ he remembereth mercy ;” so, when he had fulfilled his visitation, speaking loudly to us by a long series of unpropitious fortune, he at last opened our eyes by a most splendid instance of his providential regard, by favouring our exertions against our ancient and inveterate foe ; and when the decision of our fate drew to one momentous point of awful determination, he caused victory to declare for *us*, and by a single event laid the foundation of a general and honourable peace. “ O that men
 “ would therefore praise the Lord for his
 “ goodness, and declare the wonders that
 “ he doeth for the children of men.”—
 But this alone might not have effected the happy object of our present praises, had he not raised up servants who were duly qualified for the conducting his merciful designs, and well disposed, from sterling wisdom, to be instrumental in the restoration of public tranquillity and happiness. Their prudent, equitable, and humane exertions to this end (under the guidance of God’s good providence) we are now met to celebrate ; and for which every good man (as my text expresses it) will earnestly deter-

mine "to praise his Maker without ceasing."

Now, in order to prepare the heart for a due exertion of praise, it must come penetrated with a thorough sense of gratitude; and this cannot be effected without a previous conviction that a manifest bounty hath been conferred upon us.

And here three things most obviously present themselves to our consideration, as being intimately connected with the subject of this discourse.

First, That we have incurred the punishment of Heaven by our careless and sinful lives.

Secondly, That war being the forest of God's judgments (of which we have had long and severe experience), the deliverance from it enjoins the highest degree of praise. And,

Thirdly, That we should be very careful to profit from the remembrance both of the infliction and deliverance; and that, as "God is slow to anger, and of great goodness," we should be the more diligent not to provoke his wrath in future, "lest a worse thing befall us." For, as one of the prophets

phets declares, “had they walked in the
“ways of God, they should have dwelt in
“peace for ever.”

First, then, I do not suppose that any one will be so hardy as to dispute the great decline of religious duties amongst us, or deny the too general profligacy of the times, which certainly flows from this fatal neglect. No one can be so ignorant, or dissingenuous, when closely pressed, as not to feel and own a lamentable deficiency in his own particular conduct respecting christian faith and practice; comparatively with his perseverance in *worldly* pursuits, and his assiduous attachment to sensual delights. It would carry me too far at this time, to dwell upon the vast variety of particulars in which we *all offend*; in which we have grossly transgressed the laws of God; trifled with our immortal no less than temporal happiness; and merited the final vengeance of the Deity. For the sake of brevity, and that I may not encroach upon your patience, I will comprise the multitude of our crimes into a *single term*; but it is of enormous magnitude—the sin of *ingratitude*—which is the foulest mark of human depravity.

We need only employ our impartial recollection to stamp the baseness of our deportment in this sad article ; to prove the fact to our endless shame, and to exact the humblest confession and supplication for forgiveness : for whether we estimate ourselves as a nation at large, or as separate members of the community, the truth will be abundantly verified.

We have been blessed with a religion the purest that can be conceived, which owed its establishment in this country to the most wonderful and gradual interference of God's providence ; so as to compose one of the most curious and interesting histories that are extant. It is burthened with no ceremonies or penalties, but what decency recommends, and reason and the most admired laws enjoin. We have experienced the unparalleled blessing of a government the mildest and most justly celebrated for the security of men's common rights and liberties, ever formed by man, so that it seems to indicate the favourite influence of Heaven. We have had a succession of princes over us, of the protestant line, supporting this valuable constitution both of church and
state,

state, and interested in the freedom of their subjects. We have been long strangers to the miseries of civil war, and the devastation of pestilence; most eminently befriended by the Almighty in all our warlike achievements in former times; dignified by the most important victories over our enemies during long and various military conflicts of later date; blessed with vast accession of wealth and foreign territory, and for a considerable course of time proved by unlimited indulgence of these several advantages. We are governed by a native prince; a circumstance of fondest exultation, and natural for most countries to desire; and whose virtues are exemplary to all the potentates we know of; an admirer himself of the elegant and useful improvements of life, and an encourager of all those arts and sciences which adorn human nature, and are the happy growth of peace and universal prosperity. Let us now enquire how we have acted under this Elysium, as I may call it, of earthly happiness; in *one* sense, this second *golden* age. Have we been pious? have we been thankful? have we made any proportionable advances in *religious* grati-

tude for this reign of beneficence? Have we not sadly declined in all moral proficiency?—Answer for me yourselves! The history is in your own lives, and the conduct of all around you! Or shall I resolve the question by a few more convictive queries? How have we employed that prodigious influx of wealth, which has been pouring into this country for many years? Has it tended to dignify human nature, or to corrupt it? Hath much been employed in public honour to God, in softening the inequality of the human lot? or hath it been squandered upon the rarest and most profuse luxuries of its possessors, to create and gratify their lusts, to pamper and satiate inordinate appetites; and made subservient to the vices and degeneracy of the people—sunk in private useless extravagance of individuals, by encouraging such inventions, artificers, sports, and customs (besides introducing correspondent manners) as are enervating and disgraceful to the nature of man, and destructive of the simplicity and purity of the national character? Hence the universal dissipation and extravagance which many complain of, and most

subscribe

subscribe to; that rage for novelty and expence, that baneful and indiscriminate passion for equality, which is the hot-bed of envy and ruin. These are truths the most supine observer must assent to. But these abuses of God's gifts and blessings have still a worse tendency. By degenerating our manners, they act as a slow poison, that defeats the restoring palliative afforded us in this state of frailty, error, and probation—I mean RELIGION.

This was meant to bring us back to our duty whenever we should be found swerving from it, “through the infirmity that “flesh is heir to.” It was the most gracious institution God could devise for man, to prepare him for the end of his creation. The above pursuits we are all sensible totally disqualify from the practice of it. They obstruct continually the main spring that gives motion to all devout sentiment—*consideration*: and before I quit this division of my subject, I must instance *one* grand article, which I fear is held by too many of but trifling moment; yet, from the beginning of time, it has been esteemed the highest test of veneration for the Deity,

and of greatest influence on our success and furtherance in piety and virtue. It may be trite perhaps to notice, that it is always placed foremost in the catalogue of those sins of omission which lead the way to complete depravity; and according as it is attended to, or not, may be termed the barometer of men's religious principles: you will easily anticipate my mentioning the gross and universal violation of the Sabbath-day, which is most contemptuously broken by those who have the greatest leisure, most advantages of knowing better, and most required to set the best example. Veneration for this day is coeval with creation itself; it is the very *first* command, being implied by the Almighty in his own act, of ceasing from the work of his hands in the formation of the universe; as the proof whereby we acknowledge his being, and our relation to him. It is enjoined to be observed religiously from Genesis to the Revelations; and throughout the whole scripture history we have occasional and tremendous instances of peculiar visitations upon those who wilfully and grossly trespassed against this primary institute of all religion. I
 need

need not particularize how improperly, how impiously, that holy day is kept by too many among the gay and youthful of either sex, of all classes of life; but especially among the rich, who notoriously and wantonly drive off their secular affairs in the six days allotted for their transaction (especially their travelling engagements), that they may profanely employ the seventh day in premeditated dissipation, which by the dread Lord of heaven and earth is commanded to be a day of rest *both to man and beast*. “And shall I not visit for these things?” “saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged of such a nation as this? If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, I will visit their offences with a rod, and their sins with scourges:” which declaration aptly introduces the second head of my discourse.

Secondly, We have here an awful denunciation that war is sent unto us as a *scourge for our sins*, and in mercy, for our repentance and amendment. By these severe chastisements God rouses us from the lethargy of vice to a sense of our duty, and
affords

affords us further opportunity to redeem the time.

That war is one of the severest judgments that sin hath entailed upon mankind, may be proved from the whole current of profane and sacred history. It would be a tedious waste of time to enumerate this in the several cases of vanquished kingdoms. Suffice it, that every one acquainted with ancient history is sensible that the decline and total overthrow of the most celebrated states have had their end in war; and that mankind have been universally instrumental to the supreme decrees, in extirpating their fellow-creatures. Superior force lays claim to power, by the law of nature, and no agent is better qualified than man to execute the Divine vengeance *effectually*, when commissioned to exercise the unbridled passions of his disordered will: cruelty, revenge, and self-aggrandizement, give the keenest edge to the exertions of the soldier; and when the sentence proceeds from the provocation of an-offended Deity, the most direful effects may be dreaded from such causes. But still we must ever keep in view this useful truth,

truth, that God who created, hath never ceased to govern; that his judgments are ever founded in justice, and that vice and ingratitude, and neglect to improve that light, which in the depths of his wisdom he hath seen proper for each nation at different periods of the world; these have brought desolation upon the people: into this we must resolve the present appearance of dreary wastes, where the utmost grandeur and worldly prosperity once reigned; and conclude, that to the end of time God will continue to prove and punish his creatures, as most consistent in the eye of his unfathomable knowledge.

That war was the most to be dreaded of all the visitations from above, is abundantly observable from numerous passages of the sacred volume, which contain matter of much instructive information, and are very apposite to the subject now before us: they clearly shew that war was a chastisement incurred by the sins of the people; and not only used by the Almighty for the punishment of idolatrous nations, but as a peculiar and occasional correction of his own people, whenever they offended him to any intolerable

lerable degree by the transgression of his laws.

It would take up too much of your time to be minute in adducing these instances; but the histories of the Canaanites and Amalekites furnish abundant proof of it. Of the former, remnants were preserved (doubtless of the least flagitious) as instruments of future reproof for the backslidings of that very people who were ordained to root them out at last, and to be planted in their room.

When any people are ripe for punishment, and it pleases God to employ *men* in the discharge of his visitations, and the management of secondary causes, he will necessarily engage such instruments as are fitted by their qualities for the fatal service; and, on the other hand, he will always raise up and prefer those men who have a favourable disposition and becoming talents to close the wounds of a nation, and administer the healing of peace. “I make peace” and war (saith the Lord); I do all things.” And I think it will ever remain among the instructive records of misguided judgment, and incautious action, that new encouragement

couragement was built upon every information that naturally accorded with our own hopes, and an unwarrantable confidence of decisive, easy victory. The mischievous arts of latent foes were probably productive of many errors, whereby we were led to a vain and presumptuous opinion of our *own sufficiency*, and the most rash and disdainful defiance of the power of united nations, and blinded from adopting the obvious measures for success. In short, “wrath was gone forth:”—our punishment was decreed.

How deservedly we had provoked God to subject us to these mistakes, preparatory to the consequent misfortune, I have shewn in the beginning of my discourse. It is no less certain, we were made a scourge for the iniquities of those who, by a series of lamentable events, became our adversaries; and there can be but little doubt that long and mournful effects will hereafter attend *their* error, no less than that of their *allies*, who (without the gift of prophecy), it is no improbable conjecture, in the nature of things, may one day rue the encouragement of revolt, and their insidious and impolitic devices to prolong the miseries of war, and
prevent

prevent the union that otherwise might have been effected. And for the intestine broils and future sorrows, which are unavoidable from the distracted state of the dismembered colonies, and *must* be *felt* ere general tranquillity and prosperity reassume their seat among them, they may have serious cause to execrate the ambition of their domestic leaders, as likewise the inflammatory hope supplied by busy and common foes to both our interests, as instruments in judgment for their depravity and ingratitude.

To trace *their* particular delinquencies is needless on this occasion, having seen that God never visits with the sword but upon the ungodly. "In righteousness doth the Judge make war."

Upon the whole, we have but too sad proof, from what has been advanced, that the sins of an *ungrateful people* drew down the multiplied calamities from which we have been so recently and graciously delivered. No parallel from holy writ will apply in this case, where the marked iniquities of the prince and people *united* to provoke the vengeance of the Lord; for in the character of the happy Sovereign of
this

this favoured realm, we behold an object of virtuous emulation *from his youth up*. The joint and uniform practice of himself and royal consort affords indeed a singular exception to the general rule, that example is more powerful than precept; for so irreproachable, so admirable a deportment in every branch of moral excellence, should shame the licentious nobility of both sexes, and render the deviation from such exalted patterns more superlatively culpable.

As I ever held this place peculiarly appropriated to the honour of God, and the advancement of his service, I wholly consider all these events in a *strictly religious* point of view; indeed, had I ability or inclination for treating the case in any *other* light, which does not concern my province to assume, the manifest impropriety would discourage the attempt: I have therefore been particularly cautious to steer clear of all political matter, further than positively connected with the very essence of the duty we are enjoined to celebrate this day—a thanksgiving to Almighty God for our deliverance from the evils of war. But as the interests of our church and state are so intimately

mately combined, and the prosperity or disorder of the one so instantaneously and effectually felt by the other, that in this happy cement consists the strength and beauty of our excellent constitution, it would baffle the most industrious ingenuity in a discourse upon the dangers escaped, and the wholesome consequence of the visitation, to preserve a total silence upon the general causes that introduced them, and the visible effects of precipitate and hazardous measures. To separate all the religious consequences from the various tendency of human actions, would exhibit a fabric without foundation, and vacate the relation between the Supreme Ruler and his moral subjects; which affords the inexhaustible and only fund for all religious enquiry and exhortation.

The long experience and soreness of the calamity will most naturally incline every good and considerate man to a proportionate degree of gratitude and praise for the mercy of the deliverance. The magnitude of the slaughter too dreadfully implies the angry hand of Heaven: "There fell down many slain, because the war was of God." The
mourning

mourning of the orphan and widow will not speedily subside. It would be needlessly afflicting to recapitulate, or dwell upon particulars that have proved so mournful, further than may contribute to magnify our sense of the blessing of peace on any terms; especially of one so unexceptionable in its conditions to all wise and good men. Daily proofs, on cooler judgment and deliberate investigation, will I fear be seen of the deep traces that necessarily remain in consequence of provoking the Most High to anger. Every individual must justly expect to pay his portion of a debt incurred by unsuccessful perseverance in a national cause. *All* have more or less offended; the unavoidable just consequence is *universal* punishment; and the only acceptable deportment under exigencies of this nature, is submissive resignation, humble atonement, and a peaceable and becoming contribution to that system of œconomy and worldly policy which it hath pleased God to appoint for our recovery. And here I may with truth aver, it ought to be matter of heart-felt gratulation, and general praise to Almighty God, that among his manifold

undeserved benefits vouchsafed to us, he has crowned his good gifts by providing instruments so adequate to fulfil his merciful designs towards us. Whatever the voice of envy or malicious rancour may insinuate with rash absurdity to the contrary, the circumstance of YOUTH will never be objected, where genius, fortitude, and penetration supply the place of full experience: the latter *must* come, and still improve the former. A spring of wisdom and virtue promises a rich harvest of glory and prosperity in riper age. The youthful David was derided for his years, and his prowess invidiously attributed to misplaced ambition; but he proved most eminently victorious; he slew his foe, put the enemy to flight, and delivered his king and country, spite of all the evil insinuations of his jealous brethren: but let us not forget *that God was with him*. It is likewise a matter of superlative support to our future expectations, and of additional praise to Heaven, that those other rulers advanced by Providence to the seat of power, are no less eminent in their respective posts. Whatever invincible firmness and sterling judgment;

ment; whatever the most rigid veneration for the laws can promise; whatever great abilities and unwearied industry can assure, we may justly look for from such an union. —It is worthy notice, in the passage of the Psalm from whence my text is taken, that our translators have *pointedly* expressed, that this praise shall be peculiarly the never-ceasing task of every *good* man. I hope it will not be thought digressing from my subject, if I remark, from this particular addition in the translation, how extremely degrading it must be to human nature, how foully insensible to the choicest of God's mercies, should any be found who are not only indifferent to those recent favours, but actually dissatisfied therewith. One would hardly suppose such beings could exist in civilized society, and a christian land: but the introduction of this epithet into the translation, evidently implies a suspicion that there *were* such characters at *all times*; and it is a melancholy truth, that there are still too many such contemptible examples of human depravity—men who could sacrifice to the passion for *amassing* wealth every distinguishing property of noble minds,

S 2

every

every amiable sentiment, every thing they should hold most dear in the character of sincere and natural friends to the community they compose : nay, there are wretches so absorbed by covetousness, that they would hazard the very existence of their country, and even their own consequent ruin, rather than forego a selfish and monstrous advantage of pecuniary profit ; so enslaved are they by the tyrannical influence of the love of gain.

Wealth being one of the sinews of war, the constant supply of that powerful ingredient furnishes a number of men with occupation, whose sordid turn of mind inclines them to an usurious traffic in that important article—men of groveling souls, who have but the single object of self-importance before them, through the greedy accumulation of treasure. I need not specify the several branches of this class of traders ; but only lament, that, by the fatal contraction of their sentiments, they are led to repine at any event that reduces the advantage of their claims, and curtails the opportunity of adding internal rapine to external violence.

It has been ever found that no passion so completely

completely enslaves the mind of man, so engrosses his affections, and so hardens his nature, as avarice; hence it is no longer so wonderful, as otherwise might appear, that there should be characters divested of humanizing sympathy, or even concerned at the approach of *peace*, which diffuses plenty, circulates the article they hoard to oppressive purposes, the destructive sources of usury and imposition.

Thirdly, I shall now endeavour to make an instructive application of what I have humbly conceived to be pertinent to the subject of our present meeting. Permit me to introduce it in the language of a very eminent divine. “It is our highest wisdom ever to entertain a just sense of God’s judgments; or of his hand in procuring and permitting the evils which befall us; much more of our own sins, which are the meritorious cause of them: nay, he expects that we should acknowledge his providence, and the justness of it, in his severest dealings with us; that we should be humbled under his mighty hand, and turn to him who smiteth us, and bear the indignation of the Lord patiently, because

“ because we have sinned against him.”—
 “ Whatever is a just cause of God’s displea-
 “ sure against us, ought to be a just and
 “ reasonable cause of trouble to us.”

I have attempted to shew you that the cause of God’s correction originates in our abuse of his abundant mercies, and the misapplication of his benefits and blessings. Let us not presume then (through a perversion of that text which declareth “ whom “ he loveth he chastiseth”) to provoke him to further judgments, for “ it is a fearful “ thing to fall into the hand of the Lord;” but let us, on the contrary, be most humbly diligent to profit by the corrections of our Heavenly Father. Let his wholesome visitations excite us to timely repentance; for that nations have their period of trial limited, as well as individuals, is evident from our Saviour’s prophecy and denunciation concerning Jerusalem—“ they knew “ not the time of their visitation;” from his pathetic commiseration of their blindness, and from the wicked perverseness and obstinacy of the inhabitants.

But while we are expressing a becoming sense of the particular good gifts God has bestowed

bestowed upon us, let us ever chiefly keep in view that grand object of his most gracious regard—the redemption of mankind, and the invaluable blessing of the gospel of Christ! For this being the most exalted proof of his extensive and astonishing love for us (as it raises us from sin and death to holiness and immortality), sufficient praise and gratitude can never be offered to him: this will assure us “peace which passeth all “understanding.” From a cold and unworthy reception of our blessed Saviour’s love, and from slighting the riches of his proffered grace, proceeds our secret and most invincible evil; that want of *inward peace*, without which we shall ever remain insatiable amidst the utmost gratifications of this life; and, possessed of which, every temporal evil will appear in such a light as to discover the wisdom and goodness of God’s government, and arm us for the trial we were created to exercise, to render us capable of receiving a more perfect inheritance.

To the rapid and fatal decline of all actual religion amongst us, we must incontestably attribute the various calamities that have befallen us, either public or private;

and rest assured that our final ruin will inevitably follow, if we do not speedily correct the error of our ways : of this I have afforded great and awful examples in the fate of other much favoured nations. Nay, all pious persons, who make a comparative view of the religious state of former ages with the present times, and the deplorable degeneracy of respective character among all ranks and classes of society, can but wonder at the gracious lenity of our indulgent Creator, and adore him for his long-suffering towards us. Let us seize then this happy opportunity of general tranquillity to reconsider our ways. Let us accept most gratefully this timely warning, lest the candlestick be removed from us, as it hath been from other churches of old ; lest the light we have rashly slighted be put out, and no further season afforded for repentance. If every one of us would weigh these truths with the seriousness due to their important consequence, and, totally independent of his neighbour's case and conduct, resolve only to be circumspect in his *own* religious concerns ; if we would implore the forgiveness of our offended Maker, ask and seek earnestly

neftly the aid of our meritorious and ever blessed Saviour and Interceffor, the change that would enfue would be equally blessed as astonishing: it would affure us peace for ever here, and hereafter. That it might be accomplished is moft certain; for it is God's pleafure, it is his command; and an all-powerful Being cannot enjoin impossibilities. That we cannot effect it of ourfelves is undeniable; but the adequate *means* are propofed to us in God's word, ftrengthened by his fared promifes, and our own constant exertions; and a grateful acceptance of them is all that is wanting. Can we doubt but that what is the declared duty of each particular creature will be ftrictly required of him? and what excuse fhall we with efficacy allege, when the object is in our reach, and the power to obtain it fupplied upon the moft unexceptionable conditions? "Without me," faith our moft blessed Mafter, "ye can do nothing." "All things are given me of my Father." As falvation is obtained for us, let us prove ourfelves worthy of fuch mercy; let us ftrive to become the happy children of fo gracious a Father and Redeemer. "I am the vine,"
addeth

addeth he; “ye are the branches:” as the vine therefore beareth fruit through the virtue communicated from the root, so must we expect to become holy through the spirit of Christ helping us. Let us not be Christians then merely according to the outward form of baptism, by taking the *name* only of our Redeemer, as we do of our sponsors, without partaking further of the qualities and benefits of the one more than we often do of the other; but let us labour to become *Christians indeed*, such as Christ will joyfully own to be his *true disciples* at that dread day of reckoning, when the neglected benefits of the gospel must be accounted for, and we shall all be judged according to the measure of light we have received, or the use and abuse we have made of it. I am conscious I have exceeded the usual limits of my discourse for your instruction from this place; but my hearty zeal for your most serious concerns, and a fervent desire to acquit myself to the best of my humble abilities upon this *particular* and *happy* occasion, will I hope procure me your kind indulgence. This appeal I trust to his tribunal, to whom all hearts are open;

who knoweth the sincerity of my professions, whose praise and glory it is as much my delight and wish to extol, as it is my peculiar office continually to celebrate. And that we may close our present sacrifice of public thanksgiving in strains of suitable humility and gratitude, I will again adopt the pious sentiments of the royal Psalmist, who aboundeth in becoming expressions on this subject.—“ Let all the earth fear the
 “ Lord; stand in awe of him all ye who
 “ dwell in the world.—Thou art a place
 “ to hide me in: thou shalt preserve me
 “ from trouble: thou shalt compass me
 “ about with songs of deliverance.—Be ye
 “ not like unto horse or mule, which have
 “ no understanding; whose mouths must
 “ be held with bit and bridle, lest they fall
 “ upon thee.—Great plagues remain for
 “ the ungodly; but whoso putteth his trust
 “ in the Lord, mercy embraceth him on
 “ every side.—Be glad, O ye righteous,
 “ and rejoice in the Lord; and be joyful
 “ all ye that are true of heart.”

Now, &c.

S E R-

and now the way of my life
hills, where peace and quiet
my delight and refuge is
because of the continual
that we may close the present
public of suffering in the
humanity and gratitude. I will again
the good sentiments of the royal
who standeth in the path of
this is the way of the
"I have heard in the
"dwell in the world—
"to find me—
"from trouble: for
"about the songs of
"not like the birds of
"no understanding: who
"be held with the birds,
"I have heard in the
"the way of the
"in the Lord, more
"every day—Be glad,
"and rejoice in the Lord;
"all ye that are true of heart."

66 SE 28

S E R M O N X I.

A FAREWELL SERMON.

Mœstus—alloquor extremum amicos—
—— Jamque vale.



S E R M O N X I.

2 COR. xiii. 11.

Finally, brethren, farewell: be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

WITH this serious and affectionate advice and benediction, the holy apostle St. Paul takes leave of the church at Corinth. It was his final epistle to the Gentile converts, and his other disciples in that country; and in this concluding verse he seems to comprise almost every valuable exhortation and attainment necessary to christian perfection.

I have made choice of these words, my friends, the occasion being something similar; and because it is the last opportunity I may ever have of delivering any spiritual instruction

instruction to you from this place, I would gladly employ a text the most comprehensive in its matter, as well as serviceable to your best interests.

This apostle, after two years indefatigable pains, had planted a considerable church in that part of Greece: in his absence from them they were over-run with great disorders, to the injury of the christian religion, and consequently to their own disgrace; for deserting the sound doctrine he had preached among them, this was the reason of his writing. I have been permitted to continue *your* public instructor for a much longer space of time: would to God that I could in any just degree compare myself to this eminent apostle, either in gifts, or assiduity in our Master's cause; and particularly in the fruits of my endeavours, such as they have been. But however weak, imperfect, or unsuccessful they may have proved, as I humbly trust they have been upright in their *object*, and purely christian in their *form*, I feel it incumbent upon me to close the discharge of my office with as solemn and useful an address and exhortation as my abilities will admit,

by

by enforcing those duties that must insure sound peace of mind to every one of you in this world (whatever storms may assail you in the passage), and a sure reward in that more perfect state, where no sorrows can intrude to disturb your peace; no temptations endanger your fall; nor time nor accident molest your happiness.

In humble imitation of the holy apostle then, I would avail myself of this occasion to review the general tenor of my ministry among you; and by pointing out what you should avoid, and principally attend to, I could wish to leave such an impression of my good will, as may help (with God's blessing) to benefit you hereafter, if you keep in mind what is said unto you: but no good hope of this, my friends, can be indulged, unless you cherish the saving principle of our holy faith, "that Jesus Christ died for you, that there is no other name by which you can be saved;" unless you call on him for aid; "for without him ye can do nothing."

In the first place then, as I perceive that the congregation is numerous and mixed, and, I may fairly suppose, many are led

VOL. I.

T

here

here from *curiosity*, no less than desire of instruction, I shall beg leave to take the opportunity of delivering a word of general advice upon a subject that strikes me may be of service to several who do *not* belong to our own parish. It is this: There is a dangerous refuge some weak and ill-taught Christians have recourse to, that the slips and inadvertencies of those appointed to inform them, of course the more exceptionable parts in their deportment, will qualify a defection in the flock, and finally stand between themselves and the just punishment of God; at least alleviate it. Nothing can be more erroneous. It is enough to mention it, to shew at once the absurdity and danger of such a notion: for though no character is more infamous than that of profligacy in a pastor, and no one would be so base as to *palliate* the conduct of such a class of men; yet, having seen in many places much evil flowing from this vain apology, this unprofitable comparison, I think it my duty to warn you of the fallacy of all such reasoning. Only examine yourselves, whether, if you had strictly followed whatever your consciences had

had concluded right, even from the most indifferent and exceptionable preacher you ever heard, you would not have found yourselves of quite another temper to what this objection supposes; more charitably disposed towards the object of disgust; at least, far wide of encouraging unseemly behaviour, and bitter invectives.

It is an incontestable assertion, that the better informed and more exalted any character is, the more conspicuous and less pardonable are any gross omissions in point of duty; and that as example lends vigour to precept, it is very desirable, and may be efficacious in establishing a perseverance in well doing. But so depraved is human nature, so sadly treacherous and perverse, that various instances might unhappily be produced, where, on the other hand, even an exemplary regard to pious practice, to regularity, and that consistency of conduct, which good sense, no less than religion, must advise, have too frequently furnished food for the most diabolical slander; and the worthy pattern has had no better effect than to supply a topic of infamous reproach. If people are so worthless as to

fall foul of godly purposes, where is the wonder they are so uncharitably loud against the failings of the thoughtless and unconverted? The discovery of vice therefore, in an elevated sphere, should rather terrify us than excite our spleen or imitation. For what a dreadful ascendancy must it have gained on human nature, when reason improved by education, and persons indebted to every advantage of station, equally become such shocking victims to it! This alone is enough to point out to us the one infallible remedy against it. Remember then, as by a man's works he standeth or falleth, it is incumbent on you always "to keep a watch over your own ways." Be not seduced by this common and ready snare of the grand adversary of mankind, to soften your crimes by the reprehensible conduct of others, be they laity or clergy; for rest assured, the weight of other men's sins will no ways lessen the punishment due unto your own; though, on a flattering comparison, they may possibly appear of smaller magnitude. Whether supineness, or incapacity, or more alarming objections mark the deportment of your teachers, or superiors,

riors, leave them to the judgment of their own consciences, and the trial of their Maker.

To one Lord we all are answerable, and we are taught in God's word to shun this pernicious offensive practice, in an instance of much more remarkable description: as the archangel himself, when contending with the devil, durst not advance " railing accusation ;" and you know St. Peter, treating of those who presumptuously speak evil of dignities, employs these words: " Whereas " angels, who are greater in power and " might, bring not railing accusation against " them before the Lord."

Listen with attentive ears to what you shall have expounded to you; receive it with penitent hearts: our holy church (blessed be God!) affords us every advantage, in communicating the saving truths of the gospel, by permitting the free use of the Bible, so that " they that run may read."

Let the words of eternal life sink deep into your souls: seize every opportunity of benefitting by them; confess your many transgressions and unworthiness; and, instead of vainly hoping to draw support from the want of grace in your fellow-creatures, if

you are possessed with sufficient conviction to be properly shocked at vice, demonstrate your abhorrence by praying for the recovery of the deluded person, and that " God will " turn the hearts of the disobedient to the " wisdom of the just." This, my friends, I humbly offer as a word of general advice to all of you who do not belong to this particular congregation, but are assembled to hear what may be collected from a *Farewell Sermon*.

As to whatever concerns my own peculiar station, how far I may have merited censure in my own person, as partaking of a degenerated nature like yourselves, must be submitted to him who knoweth the heart. It would be presumption in most of us, nay the *best*, to hazard a defence of his imperfections. Such woful examples of human frailty, even in those very disciples who were companions of our blessed Lord, when they yielded to the suggestions of the tempter, or the seductions of worldly interest, and their busy passions; when they relied on their own strength, or suffered insufficient reason to shake their faith; furnish lessons of the profoundest humility,
and

and wholesome circumspection; and we may well exclaim, “ Lord, what is man !”

However, so far I will venture to apply the language of the apostle; in *one* sense I can safely “ take you all to record this “ day, that I am pure from the blood of “ all men, for I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God, as it “ is revealed unto us.” It was upon departing from *another* seat of his apostleship, and with a farewell blessing to his friends, that Saint Paul makes *this* appeal; and I may humbly paraphrase his further declaration, that for the space, not of *three* only, but of thirteen years, I have not ceased to warn you, upon every due occasion, if not with tears, with the *purest sincerity*.

Wherefore, in this my last address, I cannot refrain reminding you of the most important concern of your lives; viz. that only principle of the christian faith, which can avail in perfecting your redemption—the full atonement by the merits of a crucified Saviour, and the benefits to be derived to us through his aid, jointly with his continual mediation and intercession. Permit me then, once more, to recommend

to your most serious consideration the following truths, as a short abstract of what we are taught by our holy religion.

It must be level to the lowest understanding, that every created being receives whatever power it has from him who made it. The mighty Author of all creation we call God, as it cannot be but that He is an all perfect being (for otherwise no signs of good or happiness could exist,) he can have formed nothing but with a view to some final good. The degrees of perfection he bestows on any particular orders of his creatures, must be resolved into his most gracious purposes of unerring wisdom. To believe this constitutes humility, that basis of pure religion. It is sufficient to exhaust our praise, that we exist at all, and have a chance of heaven. That our first parents were originally created upright, God's own word declares; and that it must be true, his very nature argues. That they had ability to have continued pure, if they would have pursued the *means*, is no less certain. Obedience was the sole condition; *that* necessarily implies humility, and was to be the test and trial of *their* faith, as it
is

is still of ours. The fatal consequence of their fall was previously told them, that they might not plead ignorance or want of aid; the sentence was *death*: so that they had a choice held out to them, for otherwise they could not have been accountable; without a will, their agency could not have proceeded from themselves, nor justly could they have been objects of punishment, or favour: the yielding to the temptation was their crime; the error clearly all their own.

It may be objected here, by ignorant or profane declaimers, that God foreknowing all things, might have opposed the falling of his creatures, and their future misery, by warning them against the malice of their too subtle enemy; for God is above the devil. It is evident he did so, from the spirit of the command itself, as far as was consistent with the nature of free creatures, and a state of probation for further happiness; the commandment being enjoined (as just now observed) for a positive trial of their duty. To have employed a power that would have *controuled* their *choice*, would have been to alter the very
nature

nature of the creature : by simply cleaving to obedience, they would have experienced the efficacy of resistance, because the will would then have been directed to its right object, and met support ; by inclining to another it became estranged, and necessarily lost its sure dependance. Far then from any subject of complaint, what do we manifestly discover in this event, but the unparalleled display, the merciful exertion of God's free love towards us, formed in the eternal counsels of his grace, the glorious design of our recovery, coeval with creation ? Instead therefore of suffering ourselves to be corrupted and misled by the vain suggestions of presuming infidels, of narrow-sighted and imperfect creatures, let us advert to the blessed effect of God's fore-knowledge ; let us strive to defeat this second snare of the tempter, by availing ourselves of the infallible means provided to prevent the rancour of this apostate spirit.

But further, the most ignorant amongst you cannot but allow (since hourly experience confirms the fact) that the ability to think and act with strict uprightness is miserably

miserably deficient. How can it be otherwise? If we were liable to transgress even in a state of innocence, is it likely we should retain the same degree of strength, after having forfeited the privileges of a purer state; after contracting the infection of polluted nature, and further increasing its depravity by evil habits? If we fell, when in the best stage of our being, and thereby contracted both sin and weakness, is it compatible with the plainest sense that we can rise again to virtue by our own attempts *alone*, without a new and more efficient power to help us? Again, does not every thing that is good proceed from God? And do we not occasionally feel a strong desire to possess his image, evidenced in the abhorrence of the evil dispositions of our minds? What then is this, but a latent spark of that restoring principle? Whence can it come, but from the original of perfection that created us? When could it be given, but at the very time of pronouncing the sentence upon our first parents? For as we all inherit the moral evil and natural imperfections introduced by Adam, so we equally partake the gifts then newly conferred

conferred upon him ; for as “ by one man
 “ all died, by one (the second Adam) shall
 “ all be made alive.” And this clearly
 relates, not to the rising of the body only,
 but to the renewal of the mind ; as it would
 profit us nought to rise again, if not to
 glory ; and *that* we cannot attain without
 christian perfection, which is the momen-
 tous business of our present life.

Had not the efficacy of “ working out
 “ their own salvation ” been instantly
 communicated to our first parents, in the
 essence of part of the decree concerning
 them, they must at once have sunk into a
devilish nature ; for any being entirely for-
 saken of God can be no other. How then
 was the invigorating gift conveyed ? As
 when God said, “ Let there be light, and
 “ there was light ; ” so he promised to his
 helpless creatures the ability to subdue their
 grand and bitter enemy, and it was effected
 in them. The offspring of the woman was
 to be too strong for all his wiles : then was
 the revelation made of what was pre-ordain-
 ed ; “ the serpent might bruise his heel,” *i. e.*
 occasionally disturb, and for a time prevail ;
 but man was “ to bruise his head,” *i. e.*
 triumph

triumph finally, if he availed himself of the only power that could assure the victory; and thus Christ our Saviour was foretold, who having obtained this to us, may be truly said “to be the light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” He was the glorious person of the holy Trinity, employed in making every thing that was made; and he also new created it *spiritually*, by the stupendous and precious mystery of its redemption.

It is true, this saving light is exceedingly obscured and obstructed by our sensual nature; but yet it exists proportionably in every one, and depends greatly upon ourselves to use the means of bringing it to perfection; and these are largely held out to us in the gospel. It no ways concerns our own case, to pry into the vast variety of dispensations God may think fit to use, or the periods of them; both are foreign to the present subject. An humble trust in God, obedience to the precepts of his Son, a thorough sense of our own natural deficiency, proper reliance on the merits of our Saviour, and the needful aid of the holy Spirit promised to us, purely on account

count of his sufferings and satisfaction ; these are the doctrines I have principally taught you, as my conscience and best information directed, for your eternal welfare. " Other foundations no man can lay " with truth and safety ; and too cautious we cannot be what we build upon it, whether, in the apostle's words, " it be gold, silver, precious stones, or wood, hay, stubble." In the display of these doctrines, I trust I have administered such plain substantial food, as if well digested cannot fail to nourish your souls ; and, without degrading the just encomium due to moral virtues, and the present reward *they* yield even here, in quieting the conscience, and effecting good to others, I have ever guarded you against the evil of all pharisaical pretension, by pointing out that superior influence which can alone qualify their effect, and thereby confirms the imperfection of our best performances, independent of this grand christian principle (now briefly recited to you), " that after all " we are unprofitable servants ; " that we are incapable of one good thought, in a strict religious sense, but through God's grace ; in conjunction with whose help we
are

are to “ work out our salvation with fear
“ and trembling,” with all the caution and
perseverance the important cause requires;
and that we shall never arrive at a true sense
of our hazardous condition, but through the
medium of profound humility.

In regard to the outward means of our
becoming christians, as the first of all that
is likely to contribute to this end; fervent
has been my desire, and earnest my endea-
vours, to enforce the necessity and benefit
of a frequent participation of the holy sa-
crament: I wish with more success, for
their sakes, who still are wanting in this
essential article of christian worship. It is
a strange and dangerous infatuation, to desist
from this positive command of Christ him-
self, replete with so many promised bene-
fits, instituted upon so awful and memora-
ble an occasion, and demanding our utmost,
our continual love and gratitude. In turn-
ing our backs upon this gracious, wholesome
feast (shocking as the thought is), we in fact
deny our faith; we refuse communion with
our fellow-christians; disdain the easy, bless-
ed way of obtaining pardon and future help
in time of need. Can any reason be ad-
vanced

vanced for such rash, such stubborn, such ungrateful conduct, but that we do not *wish to mend*? It is plainly asserted, if we ask, we shall obtain; what dreadful consequences must ensue to such as persist to refuse the offer! Every one receives this knowledge only in the degree that he desires it; and a great degree of this desire is the only proper preparation for partaking of this holy sacrament: but I have often pressed this weighty duty in this place, from arguments of every kind, and represented it in *all* its powerful shapes previous to the appointed seasons of its celebration. Time will not permit me now to add as much as I could wish upon it; indeed, I must become deeply indebted to your very partial indulgence, and approved attention, to excuse the trespass I may still make this day upon your patience; but it being the last time I shall probably offend in this respect, I persuade myself you will bear with me a little longer.

For the sake then of your own most valuable concerns, I repeat, and beseech you to remember, that however abundantly those set over you may happen to partake of human

man weakness and depravity, yet “ you
 “ will be found without excuse,” for every
 slighted opportunity of learning your duty,
 for every neglect to profit by the instruction
 dispensed for your immortal happiness.
 “ Paul planteth, Apollos watereth, but
 “ God alone giveth the increase;” and if
 you have not applied to him, or do not,
 however learned, and diligent, and exem-
 plary your minister, his labour will be in
 vain towards you, though he may save his
 own soul. As for myself, the humble and
 unworthy instrument of communicating
 God’s transcendent blessings to you, weak
 as my bodily presence and power may have
 been in the discharge of so high an office;
 far as my practice may have deviated from
 the sublime and holy precepts I revere; I
 have constantly and cordially recommended
 and urged them home to you. I am not
 backward solely to confess, and lament
 the grievous malady of our common na-
 ture; and till we all do so, we shall be in-
 capable of conceiving any proper idea of a
 Redeemer. “ The whole need not a phy-
 “ sician, but the sick:” and what is it we
 are to be saved *from*, but the corruption of

VOL. I. U a fallen

a fallen state, and our own acquired sinfulness and misery ?

I trust, *without* this declaration, you think too justly of me, to suspect that any thing I have advanced this day is founded in vain glory : far be so unworthy a principle from my object ; a pure sense of duty, and the tenderest wishes for your welfare, prompted me to discharge this task so *fully*, and so *earnestly*.

The day must come, my friends, when every counsel will be disclosed, and the motives of my conduct, and the desire of my heart towards you, will receive the merited sentence. **HERE**, possibly, in this very spot, many of us may finally meet again, never to be separated any more. At that awful change, O may I reap the double joy, from having inculcated the eternal truths of Christ's gospel, and from beholding in your unfading lot the blessed fruits of attention and *obedience* !

Having now reminded you of some general and important heads of duty, such as I humbly hope will effectually contribute to your future good, provided you treasure them carefully, and exercise them
faithfully,

faithfully, I shall pass on to the more particular consideration of the different members of the text; which I likewise apprehend will be found to contain exhortation and advice equally beneficial to your best happiness, as suitable to the immediate occasion of this address.

28 SE60

S E R M O N XII.
ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Mœstus—alloquor extremum amicos—
—Jamque vale.



S E R M O N XII.

2 COR. xiii. 11.

Finally, brethren, farewell: be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

IN the further management of the subject which induced me to select this particular text at this time, I shall now proceed to investigate more pointedly the several members it contains. First, I shall exhort you to “be perfect;” secondly, “be of good comfort;” thirdly, “be of one mind;” fourthly, “live in peace;” and lastly, let me dwell with earnest persuasion upon the consolatory promise that will accompany all your christian resolutions “the God of love and peace shall be with you:” a promise, my brethren,

(if we keep our minds intent upon it) of such prodigious comfort and support, as will remove every wavering apprehension frail flesh and blood is prone to ; will enable us “ to fight the good fight of faith,” manfully to persevere “ for the prize of our high calling,” and lead us by slow, but sure degrees, to true perfection : for you can hardly be ignorant, that, without some amendment in our nature, we shall no more be qualified to partake of the pure reward, “ than corruption can inherit incorruption, “ or this mortal immortality.”

Saint Paul implies in two words the whole of every christian virtue—“ Be perfect.” Doubtless, he well knew the expediency of our using every effort to this end ; and it is as certain, he would not have proposed to the practice of his disciples what he was not equally assured was in their power to perform, provided they employed the means, “ to perfect holiness in the fear “ of the Lord :” of these they could not be ignorant, nor could they *except* against them ; for it was the treasure of God’s own word he held out to them for this end, and his own *example* as a testimony of its efficacy.

efficacy. In this advice he only copied the precept of his divine original—"Be ye perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." If Christ first, and his holy followers after him, declare the necessity of this exertion, by the plainness and frequency of enforcing it, our enquiry cannot be too earnest how near we have arrived to it: we cannot too seriously examine the state of our souls, the practice of our lives; and in whatever degree we fall short of this qualification for eternal happiness, we should hasten in recovering the right method to obtain a sufficient portion of it. —"Be ye perfect." What an important charge! how comprehensive, and yet how free from cavil or evasion! Could we for one moment doubt of its expediency, or lean to the objection of human insufficiency, we are instantly brought back by the superior pattern that is set before us: acquiesce we must. Further, if we incline to the stronger plea of human degeneracy and weakness, as rendering us still more unequal to perfection, we are stopt by the promise of eternal truth itself: "I will send the Comforter unto you, who will qualify

“ lify you for the incumbent task :” “ I
 “ will work in you both to will and to
 “ do,” if ye do not perversely counteract
 my operations. A positive declaration, that
 in whatever proportion we feel a spirit of
 real goodness in us, it flows from God’s
 pervading influence.

You see then we have a rule that can-
 not be withdrawn, and abundant help to
 direct us in the use of it. It may assist the
 accomplishing of this needful diligence, to
 be shewn how very wide you are of the
 mark, by warning you of the danger; and,
 through the medium of godly fear, en-
 gaging you to repair and check the certain
 mischief.

If any honest man will summon courage
 to arraign the guilt of his own heart, he
 will at once confess how far he is from being
 perfect, and how requisite it is to make
 considerable advances, ere he can be equal
 to the enjoyment of an all perfect society:
 he will be obliged to acknowledge, in the
 words of scripture, “ that the heart is de-
 “ ceitful above all things, and desperately
 “ wicked,” an inexhaustible source of im-
 purity and evil. First then, you must be
 intent

intent in praying God to “ cleanse your
“ hearts ;” and then your actions will im-
prove of course : for it is the hardness of the
heart, a gross and fatal predilection in our
sensual nature, which prevents our seeing
this, and alienates us from the purifying
love of our Maker.

There is no way more effectual, or less
exceptionable, of illustrating any religious
truth, than by familiar comparison, such
as the daily commerce of life compels us to
assent to, as being level to the judgment of
every capacity : it was the powerful mode
of persuasion and instruction adopted by our
blessed Lord himself.

Let us fix upon an object then of *exterior*
concern, yet of great importance in itself,
and immediately connected with the point
in question : the *exercise of God's public*
worship, and the careless and unworthy
manner in which it is performed by many.
How distant shall we find it from even the
appearance of perfection ! If any ceremony
should be guarded by a sense of strict pro-
priety, it should be *this* ; but there are in-
decencies and defects attending it, so noto-
riously objectionable, that when brought to
the

the test of religious scrutiny, nay, if but tried by the laws of good sense and civilized breeding, cannot fail of both shocking and alarming every truly pious Christian.

I divest myself of all natural partiality from prejudice of education, in professing that I know not any religious community more unexceptionable in the mode of celebrating its worship, than our *own church*, according to its strict appointment. It has prescribed in its public rubric the most becoming order and reverential forms : but how universally are we degenerated in the *practice* of them !

First, there are few, in proportion to the number who attend God's house, who even pay the humble homage of their knees to the Father of life and light, and all the blessings they enjoy : nothing can justly extenuate this want of becoming reverence, but constitutional infirmity. As FEW unite in the audible declaration of their petitions to the throne of mercy, or in their thanksgivings; that union of grateful praise, which should distinguish *one* valuable portion of the service (the reading of the holy Psalter), is now-a-days too often confined

fined to the alternate voices of the minister and the parish clerk ; or fashionably diminished into lukewarm *whisperings* ; unless we except the pious few not yet contaminated by this modern refinement in devotion.

In many places, the season of assembling is marked by as little regularity as decorum : the most serious and affecting passages of the service are consequently disturbed by loud and frequent interruptions, no less to the discomposure of the more devout, than to the disgrace of thoughtless intruders, and the dishonour of God himself.

Now to place these enormities in a more flagrant point of view, let us only advert to the warranted deference paid to *men*. We *kneel* before our prince ; we bow to, and stand before, our superiors in situation ; we offer every mark of outward respect to recommend our suit, and testify the humblest sense of the authority we approach. How different the general deportment towards our God and Saviour let shameful custom answer !

It is an outrageous affront to worldly
breeding

breeding to interrupt a polite assembly during any of its engagements ; it argues a degree of savage rudeness to be guilty of it ; and to appear too late at an hospitable entertainment, justly stamps the trespass with excess of misbehaviour. But *what* feast is comparable to the gracious invitation of our heavenly Father ? *Whose* honour can demand equivalent respect to that we owe to Him ?

Again, how is the useful purpose of the present solemn season * neglected or abused ! Who, in these times, reckons a restraint upon the appetite as any ways needful towards moderating a too fond attachment to the world, and sensual temptations, and to fit the mind for contemplating that scene unchangeable, to which the present is but a proportionable passage ? Is it natural to suppose the miraculous example of our loving Master in this particular should ever have been left us, if *some* attempts to imitate him were not indispensable ? The farther we are removed from any æra of perfection, the greater our necessity in this

* Preached in Lent.

respect,

respect, as our own moral deficiencies do sadly prove. The practice of christian communities in purer ages plead the expediency of such a pious exercise by the stronger argument; nor can the unprecedented relaxation of modern and pretended christians (however *fashion* may delude the judgment) lessen the value or necessity of any religious ordinance.

There is another ancient and most beneficial custom, which our church prescribes at this serious season, too generally disused; I mean the catechising of the children of the parish: an exercise of vast importance to religious knowledge, without which foundation the most plain and most industrious efforts of the minister will lose considerable effect. But how is this lesson of instruction too commonly repeated? A *bird*, in time, might be better taught than some of your children are in this grand article. I need not dwell upon the description; it is enough to have one's *bearing*, to decide upon the insignificant advantage that can flow from such merely superficial and imperfect lessons. Here the *parent* and the *schoolmaster* jointly are to blame; for vain
 7 will

will be the assiduity and good intentions of a divine towards his flock, when his attendants are so ill prepared to profit by an explanation of their faith; while those, who should most naturally participate this good or evil, appear so careless in seeing them attend, so indifferent in having them instructed properly. It is matter, however, of just praise to God, the Author of every good, that the hearts of many, whose superior stations render their authority propitious to the benefit of their fellow-creatures, have been touched with a sense of the profligacy of the times, have had wisdom to trace the evil to its source, and to apply such wholesome and effectual remedies, as cannot fail in due course of time to check the progress of universal ignorance and licentiousness among the offspring of the lower class of people. I need scarce mention that I allude to the benevolent, religious, and highly commendable establishment of the *Sunday Schools*. But this by the way.

There are many other errors and omissions, in the discharge of our public and private devotions, which every serious individual must allow need much amendment:

I only

I only instance these few exceptionable particulars, to prove how far we are from *religious perfection*; how cold our hearts must be in that service, which exacts our *first* concern, ere we could perform it so ungraciously; and that till we begin to regulate the spring of this first mover, we shall continue Christians in *form*, without the power of godliness; nay, that such a graceless service will only proclaim us hypocrites in profession, and unworthy abusers of God's tendered favours. Let us labour then for perfection, according to the gifts and power given us; and having by God's help reformed these grosser corruptions in our duty, we may depend upon such supplies of strength, as will afford us matter of invaluable consolation.

Secondly, The natural consequence of our success in every religious attainment, must be an increase of *hope*: "Be of good comfort," adds the Apostle. Whether we take his words in a spiritual or temporal sense, they are generally true, and applicable, as tending to the same object. All the pains, and mortification, and reproach attendant upon a life of steady virtue, from

a perverse and sinful generation, will be largely compensated at last. The Master who hath promised, and is able to perform unto the utmost, pronounces this to be a state of trial, a warfare : that *strait is the gate that leadeth unto happiness* ; that *heaven must be taken by violence* ; that the *faithful in Christ must suffer persecution* ; besides abundant other intimations, to remove despondency, concerning what the world terms ill success in life. And why ? Because this salutary experience is the road to bliss. These declarations then should not discourage, but console us ; especially if we contemplate his *own example*, that *through suffering he advanced to glory*. For if, in obedience to his precepts, we keep a conscience void of offence, and “ fix our hearts “ where true joys are to be found,” all that we endure here will, by God’s grace, yield the value of a discipline and preparation appointed for the happiest purpose, as an indispensable mode of qualification for another society, whose humble and necessary dependance upon the one inexhaustible source of all good constitutes and perpetuates their felicity : and this is dispensed to

us upon the very same principle, that we employ an education here, suitable to the posts we have in view; and the talents we possess; a plain and unanswerable argument, that evidently demonstrates the folly and inconsistency of neglecting to *fit* ourselves for heaven. And when the experience of our own mental improvements confirms what *labour, time, attention*, and continual review and nice correction, must all unite to store the mind with any substantial knowledge, even where Nature lends the powerful aid of genius, capacity, and application; should not *this* convince us, that an *equal* diligence, at least, must be engaged to make some progress in godly perfection; when we are assured what difficulties and enemies we have to strive with, and “that without holiness no man shall see the Lord?” Should it be alleged, that, every thing below being imperfect, we must rest content with such degrees of knowledge and excellence as the present system will afford, being proportionably adequate to the purposes of this life; and that, as to sublimer acquisitions, reason objects to the expectation of any very pure advances under the manifold impedi-

ments which beset us: this weak excuse leads us at once to the scripture origin of evil, and the very first principles of religion; and is quite destroyed, as to any valuable plea for error, by a positive revelation from above, that this world alone is the appointed station for our accomplishment; that there will be no other state of trial. And to silence for ever the vague insinuations of human inability, the gracious Author of nature offers an invincible support to go through the work, on conditions the plainest, the kindest, and most encouraging that can be.

The joy then which the apostle tenders from our pious labours after perfection belongs to every age and class of Christians; each individual may abundantly partake of it, however circumstanced; in one word, it is the blessed gospel; therein we see "life and "immortality brought to light," all uncertainty removed, and comfort past description!—an atonement made, justice satisfied, mercy held out, a Mediator at hand, God himself our deliverer and friend in need, and nothing wanting but our own humble and earnest *endeavours*, our co-operation, to ob-

tain the inestimable prize. Whether therefore under affliction, or poverty, from this source unequalled consolation may be derived. If the *former* is your case, “ consider that men are born to it, as the “ sparks fly upwards;” that if endured *religiously*, your light *affliction, which is but for a moment* (comparatively), *will work for you* “ an eternal weight of glory.” If the *latter* be your condition, reflect that both come from the same hand, are visited upon particular persons, according as their several disorders require opposite remedies; always in mercy, for correction and amendment; that the Lord chastiseth every son that he receiveth. Besides, that abundance is far from being always a mark of favour in a religious light; that where it is not used in doing good, it must of necessity become a curse. How numerous are the examples where it is so! Not only from a greedy selfish desire to heap up wealth (which naturally locks up all bowels of mercy, beneficence, and generosity, the only means to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness), but how often do you see it squandered and abused in the pursuits of

X 3

luxury,

luxury, extravagance, and every wickedness! Only observe, what wretches originally are most conspicuously distinguished in this respect; what methods are too commonly contrived to gain it; what narrow, unsubstantial happiness it affords them even *here*; what endless misery these modes, and the consequent abuse of the possession, produce hereafter! Revert to the affecting parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the exact and alarming representation of an ungodly hard-hearted worldling; enough to make the poorest of you grateful for his lot, and cautious to improve it; enough to cause the proudest and most insolent abuser of prosperity to shudder at his impending danger. Death shall close their blind career of folly; and when they wake, they shall be confounded at their poverty, as much as you will be astonished at your riches. Let your treasure then be placed in heaven; let us all persevere *in seeking first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness*; and depend on this, that nothing is a solid subject of pure joy, but the prospect of God's favour: all other delight is but a dream.

Thirdly, This comforting exhortation of
the

the apostle in the text is still further enlarged and strengthened by the following persuasion of uniformity in religious conduct—"Be of one mind;" a subject, my friends, of extreme concern to be attended to, and highly proper for me to enforce at this particular time, both as a minister of the established church, and from duty bound to warn you in an *especial manner now*, of every thing that may affect your most essential interests. It would supply abundant matter for a separate discourse; at present I must content myself with a few general remarks.

Not giving due and serious attention to the spirit of this charge, I am persuaded will be hurtful in an extensive view, and extremely hazardous to any of you who indulge a wavering in your faith. It is proper to inform you, therefore, that by withdrawing from the communion in which you were baptized, you become guilty partners of division from the church, and proportionably accountable for all the evil and disorder such a desertion must create. There is but one argument that can possibly uphold a plea for separation, which is the

case of *conscience*; but *that* must be supported by this positive fact, that when a person is arrived to the fullest exercise of reason, and (upon a close and solemn enquiry) finds the church in which he was bred essentially deficient in its tenets towards salvation, and of such a cast that the professing them may be dangerous to his soul, he is therefore compelled to unite himself to a safer mode of faith. But I believe I may assert, with equal confidence as praise, this is not the case of the communion *you* belong to. If a soul is safe within the pale of any church in Christendom, it is in that of England. If the faith it teaches flows from that pure source the gospel; if it can stand the nicest test of uncorrupted Christianity; if its orthodoxy is marked by the humblest trust in Christ's merits, and the promised aid of the holy Spirit; if its doctrines are founded in the preaching of the apostles, and that in its saving principles it varies only from those corruptive errors which sober reason must allow abundant plea for reformation; what sound excuse shall you be able to advance, if you should quit this venerable mother, and take refuge

fuge in the heterogeneous assemblies of her deluded, wavering sons? Nothing but weakness, unjust prejudice, the force of party, want of thorough information, and (oftener than any other) that fatal passion for novelty, can account for disregard of what from earliest infancy you have been taught to honour; but all these pleas united form not a *warrantable defence*.

But in this place I must desire you to distinguish *sensibly* and *charitably*, nor conceive that I am dealing out unfair and unbecoming sarcasms or reflections against any sect the laws defend, from the liberal spirit of toleration, or which the force of unavoidable influence of education must naturally and warrantably sanctify to the professors. I would only intimate what fault and danger you may incur, by wantonly departing from a faith and practice, without disparagement as sound and as little tinged with imperfection as any society that partakes of human constitution. Much powerful argument and valuable advice might still be added to dissuade from this unprofitable, nay pernicious, apostacy; but time obliges me to forbear.

Fourthly, The concluding portion of
I the

the text contains this very wholesome counsel, “ Live in peace ;” a disposition that must ever accompany a desire *to be perfect*, and prove most efficacious in assuring “ comfort ;” which closely concerns the last part of my subject ; but I am obliged to be equally brief in the discussion of it. *Peace*, my friends, is generally sought where it never was, nor ever will be found in the world : it is the gift of Christ alone, who reconciles us to ourselves. True peace cannot be found but in the possession of God’s favour ; and that cannot be obtained but by faith and obedience : in whatever degree we inherit this possession, either in time or eternity, our enjoyment will be proportionably perfect. It mends the desires, moderates the passions, and inspires with hope of endless happiness ; procures the joy of the Holy Ghost, a joy persisting in the midst of sufferings, and flowing from a pure and endless source, the world can neither hinder nor diminish ! But our enquiry must be, what temper leads the soonest and the best to this attainment ? The answer is at hand, Charity, which is the *very bond of peace* ; not merely the fulfilling benevolent purposes, however frequent, con-

siderable,

fiderable, and judicious ; for you know what
 the same apostle fays of *that* virtue fingly,
 in diftinction from the other. Charity is
 but another name for religious love ; and,
 to evince the purity of the Fountain whence
 it fprings, it must be univerfal. This is
 the quality we must strive to imitate, to
 render our peace both pure and permanent.
 To this virtue peculiarly belongs the fin-
 cere forgiveness of any wrong. To improve
 it, we must lay our own hearts bare ; not
 calumniate or judge the conduct of another,
 because complexion and education (or what-
 ever makes us differ) save us perhaps from
 the commission of *their* particular crimes
 and follies ; but knowing that we inherit the
 seeds of one common evil nature, we must
 employ the appointed means of mending
that, and, in deep humility for our own
 deficiency, cultivate a Christian feeling for
 the errors of our neighbour : it being weak-
 ness and hypocrisy in an odious measure
 industriously to explore and censure those
 defects, which under fimilar influence we
 certainly should not have avoided ; and
 whilst we still labour under tempers, and
 habits, perhaps more hurtful in the end.
 Till this happy change is effected in us,
 slender

flender will be the harvest of our intended peace. Lastly, to crown a wise compliance with the several exhortations in the text, the apostle presents us with a most precious promise, “The love and peace of God shall keep you”—a consolatory aid that will accompany all your Christian resolutions and endeavours; a promise of such inestimable value, as to quiet every perplexing fear that human weakness can suggest, and light your way to endless happiness; for it cannot admit of a doubt, by any serious or well-instructed person, but that here the creature is tried and trained for a suitable and final sentence at the last great day.

A few words more before we part, and I have done. As I know I should reproach myself hereafter, if in the closing of my office I omitted any tribute of *gratitude* which the present moment calls for, and my earnest inclinations prompt, I cannot dismiss you without a public declaration of my *deep regret* at leaving you; without the most *cordial wishes* for the prosperity and happiness of *every one present*: for as I have the flattering satisfaction to hear that there are many amongst you most unaffectedly concerned

concerned at my departure, I should esteem myself unpardonably deficient, and doing violence to my own *best* feelings, was I to neglect expressing the most grateful sense of such *kind regard*, and of every other obliging attention I have experienced from you *so many years*; and I assure you most sincerely, the affection of the meanest individual of you all is far more welcome to me than the highest compliment from those who have words at will; because this testimony of *your* attachment must flow from purity of principle, unassisted by the natural effect of exterior polish, or ceremonious forms.

It is little short, I believe, of fourteen years since I *first* engaged in the charge I am now resigning; a space, in the calculation of mortality, of near two lives of men. Alas! if the trespasses and omissions of the *best* of us were to be strictly canvassed during such a period, how serious, how melancholy would be the review! How must many regret their rash neglect, the foul return they have shewn for such astonishing favours from above, as we might number in our respective cases; and for every instance of good fortune, through God's blessing
upon

upon our endeavours! Doubtless, the ungrateful misapplication of our time must wofully aggravate the last account, unless we profit by the further space that may yet be spared to us. Let us all then, my kind friends, be henceforth wisely cautious not to abuse the mercies we have received, but vigorously endeavour to *redeem* the time.

But further; it is with the purest truth I can assert, that was it right for me to indulge my own fond wishes, I should certainly continue, from habitual partiality, in this spot, till it pleases God to remove me wholly from the universal scene of trial and uncertainty. It will be readily allowed I have given indisputable proofs of my attachment to it (perhaps too strong ones), for any one to doubt the preference I confess. Just respect to the memory of valuable connections (no longer with us), no less than due regard to some few remaining, obliges me to say I have had various and powerful temptations to rivet my partiality to this station, and consequently less easy to resist: and if some of the most captivating, though less substantial attractions, have now made themselves wings, and are

are gone for ever, yet * *ties of considerable weight* remain, to heighten the natural concern I feel on quitting this place.

On the retrospect of my general conduct, my conscience yields the satisfaction of having been invariably studious to cultivate the favour and esteem of the many respectable characters who have honoured me with their friendship, no less than to promote the welfare of my humbler neighbours to the best of my circumscribed ability. It is from no unworthy principle of vain boasting that I make this observation; for the pleasing notice of *both* parties, I am duly sensible, *abundantly rewards much better services*. A quick succession of unforeseen and sinister events have rendered me long acquainted with care and disappointment, and contribute to induce my *change of situation*: and though I have been enabled, through God's goodness, to hold up, by becoming resignation and humble hope, yet there is a mark we must not pass, without risking the charge of irreligious presumption, without relinquishing what alone can yield us certain consolation; *an unsullied purity of intention in all our projects*.

* The Author's mother was then living near him.

It is not in our power to command success, or positively fix our station, however grateful the *choice* may be to blind self-love. When *duty* calls, every lower gratification must give way; and we must submit with pious acquiescence to the decrees of Providence, who governs all events, and can direct the most unpleasant to our greatest good.

Finally, my friends, farewell! And though I humbly hope my race is not so short, as to induce me to conclude in the apostle's pathetic intimation, "that you will see my "face no more;" yet at all events, permit me to take my leave in his most pious language: "Now therefore, my brethren, "I commend you to God, and to the word "of his grace, which is able to build you "up, and to give you an inheritance among "the saints in heaven." May this be the happy lot of each of us now present, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour.

To whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, three Persons and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all power, &c. Amen.

28 SE60

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.